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Photograph by Howard Burtt

WALL OF MANITOU '

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THE CATSKILLS

By
T. MORRIS LONGSTRETH
Author of "The Adirondacks," etc.

ILLUSTRATED WITH
PHOTOGRAPHS AND
A MAP

NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.
1918

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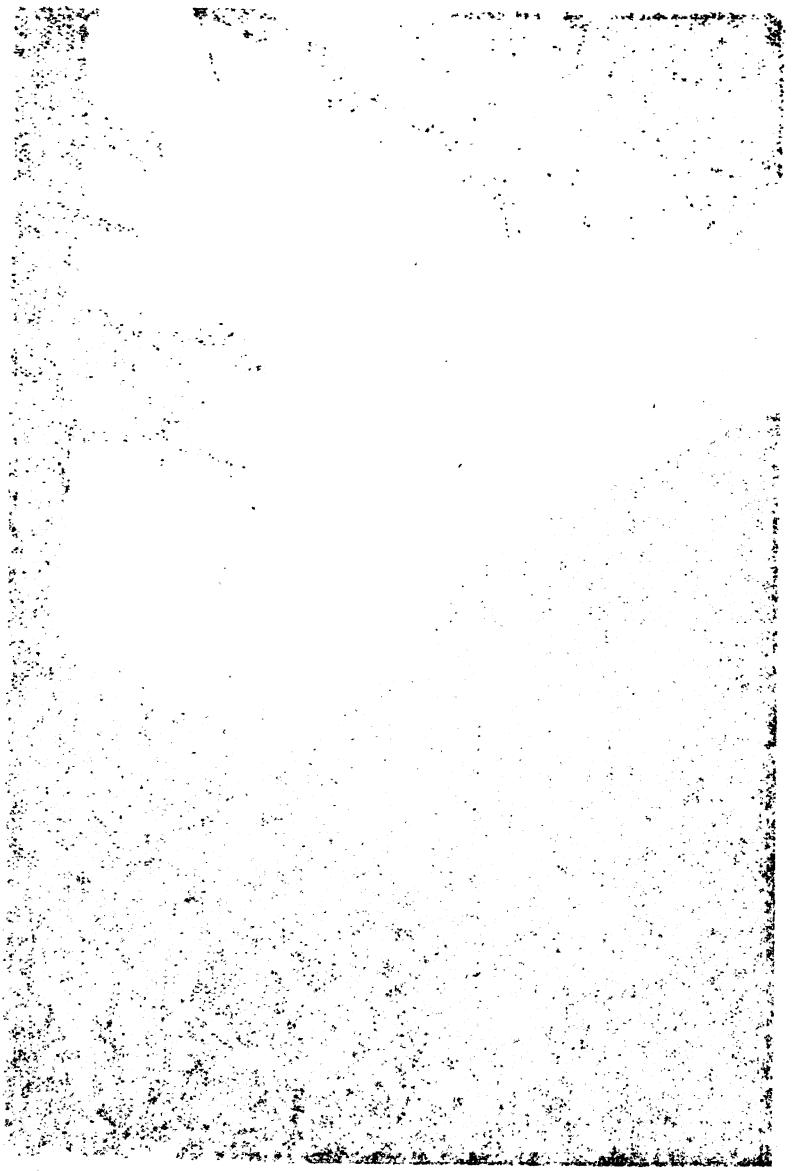

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DEDICATED WITH LOVE

TO

MARTHA M. HALDEMAN

WHOSE SYMPATHY AND ENCOURAGE-
MENT HAVE BEEN NEVER-FAILING

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	Introductions All Round	3
II	Woodstock and the Overlook	15
III	Meandering by the Map	30
IV	The Wall of Manitou	40
V	Apostasy of a Cheerful Liar	50
VI	Natty Bumppo's View	65
VII	When Is a Waterfall?	85
VIII	That Elusive Van Winkle	95
IX	Stony Clove	115
X	A Chapter on Shoes	134
XI	Brute's Little Game	141
XII	Out Windham Way	155
XIII	The Winter Woods	175
XIV	The Northwest Redoubt	202
XV	Big Injin and Heap Big Slide	210
XVI	Spring and Mr. Burroughs	238
XVII	Intermezzo	255
XVIII	A Rendezvous with June	260
XIX	Mount Ashokan and the Reservoir	266
XX	The Happy Valley	275
XXI	Beaverkill Bush	284
XXII	The Catskill Park	299
	Some Guide-Book Addenda	312
	Index	319

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
Wall of Manitou	*Frontispiece*
Map	8
"Dark Lines of Widening Torrent"	17
Knapsack and Shoe-Leather	18
A Sawkill Memory	35
Splutterkill, Splatterkill	36
The Onti Ora	53
Mountainside—Santa Cruz Park	54
Natty Bumppo's View	71
Haines' Falls	72
Crest of the Kaaterskill	89
Kaaterskill Falls	90
Down the Kaaterskill Clove	107
Profile near Palenville	108
Plateau and Stony Clove	125
Hunter Notch—Stony Clove	126
The Esopus near Shandaken	143
Phoenicia	144
Out Windham Way	161
Valley of the Westkill	162
The Winter Woods	179
The Wittenberg	180
Late of Wittenberg Forest	197
Ashokan from the Wittenberg	198

Digitized by Google

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
A Slope of Utsayantha	215
South from Utsayantha	216
Man-Not-Afraid-of-Company	249
Woodchuck Lodge	250
Stamford from Utsayantha	267
Nearing Grand Gorge	268
Roxbury the Rare	301
Green Pastures	302

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTIONS ALL ROUND

THE principal, grand, and conclusive thaw had come late in March. There had been previous slight relentings of the cold, occasional dribblings from noontime icicles; but winter, usually so intermittent with us, had stuck to being winter for weeks at a time until Greenland's iciest mountains and our less pretentious suburb had much in common.

At last, however, the snows were ebbing away. The wealth of whiteness that the north wind had spent his months in amassing was being squandered by the spendthrift south in a few days. First the deep ruts ran with water, and soon the entire roads. The broad fields grew noisy with dark lines of widening torrent. Houses that one day stood beside a lake the next stood in it; and from humid dawn till hazy eve an adolescent sun brooded upon an emerging world. It was a beautiful representation of Genesis in rehearsal.

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And after Genesis came Exodus. The abandon of mounting spring had kindled in me a longing for outdoors and the open road altogether incompatible with the rigors of professional hours. No youngster in our school had computed more exactly than had I the interval between the moment in question and vacation; between the acute present and an abstract future.

Outdoors the glint of yellowing willows and the encouragement of the song-sparrow were daily growing stronger. But they were confronted indoors by a calendar and a Committee of Education.

"Come out and be human," sang the song-sparrow.

"Stay in and be educated," shouted the Committee of Education.

In this chorus of competitive invitation the Committee would have drowned out the bird if the quiet hand of chance had not given a signal: a band of itinerant measles came to visit in our vicinity.

If it be so that our personality is betrayed by our prayers, then mine are not for publication. For they came true. The measles—I hoped they would be light cases — did not abate their duty; nor did the Board of Health. In the first flush of spring, before the last drifts had vanished from the lee of hedges and before

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the maple-sap would have started in the mountains, we were furloughed. We became as free as song-sparrows. In a twinkling of the imagination the dim blue ranges of my day-dreams changed to the tangible dirt of the road beneath my feet. Once unmoored, it had taken me little time to get under way. A train, a trolley, a ferry; and the first of April was leading me forth from the Hudson-washed city of Kingston to tramp for a full month (measles permitting) through the mountains that banked ahead of me against the western sky. I had stout shoes on my feet and a stout knapsack on my back, and my head was filled with visions of broiled trout. Nothing else, except possibly the hot-cakes, mattered. To be sure, I was alone, which is not the best estate for highwaying; but even that condition could not damp my spirits as I struck out through the mud of the late merry month of March.

March had gone out like a ewe-lamb, and so had I. Had I not listened to the farewells of friends and to their prophetic qualms! All winter memory had been filling my eyes with pictures of shadowy gorges and winding woodways, with a full meal at the end of every proper period. The friends reminded me that those pictures were illusion, that spring is a sodden equinox and corn meal monotonous. Do not despise the dangers of

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setting out a month ahead of convention! As I listened I was almost persuaded to go back on those beneficent measles. There was a dash of truth in what they said. It is quite true that there is no walker who has not longed sometime for wheels, no vagabond who would not at times trade all his liberty for the discomforts of home. Every seeker has often criticized the curiosity that led him forth. But he who would find must also seek. On that eventful morning of brilliant skies and buoyant airs, the rhythm of the road made me as forgetful of farewells as is the new-risen soul in Paradise of the burial service. In an hour I had left the little city and the Hudson well behind.

I doubt whether the approach to the Elysian Fields can be more quietly beautiful than was that elm-lined road along which my pilgrimage led. To the west and to the north mountains rose perpendicularly from the plain. The plain was bare, the mountains snow-covered, and distance endowed them with living color, a faint mother-of-gentian blue. They rose in conscious dignity. Apparently they were not concerned with making an impression by pinnacles or ragged edges; they coveted no cheap splendors. They had taken time to be perfect, established, beautiful.

Despite the clearness of the air, the mountains grew visibly nearer with every mile, always a comforting observation to any one used to the co-

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quettish qualities of Western distances. The general ranges disclosed their more richly tinted valleys. The gray of the leafless forest was darkened here and there with patches of conifer. Climbing a little hill beside the road, I came upon my first surprise of a surprising day. At my feet there shone a mountain lake, ice-green and without apparent end, where there had never been a lake before. On earlier visits to the Catskills I had ridden through the lowlands where now sparkled and flared these unexpected ice-floes. Yet the setting was perfect, the lake fitted into its scene as magically as does Derwentwater. Along one edge the silver gleam of water liberated itself from the frozen glare of aged ice and danced in the sun. For miles back into the mountain-land the body of the lake extended, with bays winding between the hillocks on either side. Was the world still under creation's spell, I wondered? Then I remembered that it was the great new Reservoir. But in remembering the beauty of it grew no less.

My itinerary was unplanned. There was still a week before trout might legally accept the fly. I had thought of wandering about the mountains prospecting for rich pools. But now there was a decision to be made. Yonder beckoned the ancient hills; here invited a new lake, to which—? At such moments of decision the tiniest of considera-

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tions may switch one of the contending molecules from pro to con and one's destiny be changed eternally. The consideration in this case was ordinary enough. An automobile of the universal type stopped at the roadside.

At first the mere stopping of the car, inasmuch as I did not care to ride, had no apparent bearing upon my future. But presently the youth who had been diverting himself beneath the hood called to me, and my attention was withdrawn from the impersonal attraction of the Ashokan Reservoir to the personal ones of the driver. Since I had been alone for nearly two hours, I was quite ready to speak with my kind. But with this young fellow it was business first, and that without conversation. He said merely:

"If you 'll hold that I 'll crank her."

I held it and she was cranked. But she still sulked. Force was, as usual, of no avail with the female of the species. I ventured a pleasantry to that effect, but it fell upon ears primed only for the purring of the motor. So I put down my pack until he should ask me to do something else. There was something about the boy that put one in a mood to oblige him, and I was rather surprised at the car's obstinacy. He now set about engaging earnestly with the diversities of its interior. I had nothing to do but observe him.

He was obviously strong. If there is any series

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of motions better calculated to exhibit natural endurance than an automobile crank in process of revolution, it has never been revealed to me. With the sun now in its zenith, I watched his exertions with admiration. He neither began to melt and exude away as the unfit would have done; nor did he explode in sound as the mentally ungoverned might; nor did he even persist in performing the same deadly orbit as a merely stubborn ox would do. Between every few revolutions he got his wind by reckoning up the as yet untried combinations possible to the machinery.

When he stood erect I saw that, despite his strength, he was not so very tall or powerfully built. He was about the age, I judged, at which I should have been teaching him Cicero. But I doubted whether he had ever heard either of Marcus Tullius or of his tongue. The buoyant health written over him did not speak of still hunts through dead phraseologies. There was grease on his cheek and dirt on his clothes, which were neither new nor patched. "Good American blood," I remember thinking at the time. With an idleness born of the drenching sun, I watched him, sometimes holding things as requested, but never to any purpose.

"She 'll come around all right," he said, spitting through the wheel. "It 's what I get for trying to do without the —" He mentioned one of

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the internal necessities, the use of which he had questioned. As the car was plainly subnormal without it, I suggested that he let me help him put it back. But his inventiveness was not to be so easily placated.

"Just you wait," he exclaimed, "and we 'll have her going without it. That is, if you have the time."

"I have four weeks," I replied, without much enthusiasm. He looked at me then — for the first time, I believe — and smiled, though ever so little. His eyes were fairly wide-set, and in them I fancied that I saw the man. It decided me upon staying. Looking back across vistas of conversations, jokes, journeyings, and mild adventure, it is hard to untangle Brute Vreeland, my friend, from the original stranger. But I am fairly certain that the beginning of our interest in each other dated from that glance — amused, slightly curious, but altogether amicable. "Here 's a city fellow I don't quite follow," he probably said to himself. "A real man 's worth more than a range of mountains," I was thinking at the same time. Then, quite unaware of each other's thought, we turned to the business in hand.

There were a great many more permutations of valves and things before the next cranking, and the despair that I customarily feel at the sight of a car in negative motion was held in check only by

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the boy's own faith in ultimate success. At last the miracle occurred. The distraught vehicle gave a gurgle, gave another, came to life. In we got, off we flew. And then, having no more machinery to engage him, he began to investigate me:

"Walking far?"

I estimated that it would n't be over four hundred miles in the month.

"Four hundred miles! What in the deuce for?"

"Fun and fish and freedom."

"This is a good enough sort of freedom for me," he said, patting the steering-wheel. "In a car you are n't tied to your feet and so many miles a day. You can go on and on."

"And if you walk you are n't tied to a car and you can't go on and on," I replied. "That 's the great advantage. The walker lives in the present, the motorist in the future — that is, if he lives. Walking is—"

"Yes, I ought to know," grinned Vreeland; "I only got this car yesterday. I 've lived all my life in sight of that set of mountains, and I 've never been up one of them yet. I 've often intended to, but they 're always there, kind of too handy. Maybe I 'll get back in them now. They say the roads are peach."

The narrow ribbon of macadam along one edge of which we took the curves was certainly peach.

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It was indeed flawless. We were already almost under the eaves of the mountain, and the village of Woodstock lay snug and neat before us. Quite before I thought twice, I said, "You 'd better come with me." I was sorry the instant after, for it was sheer impulse. I did n't want anybody, just then, to dictate the roads. Consequently I was relieved when he replied:

"I 'd do it with you, but I have n't been home for a good while. I work down Kingston way, in a garage. Business is kind of slack now and I got a week off. We 're putting in a bath-room home. If it was n't for that I 'd get you to show me how to walk."

"There 's nothing like it," I said faintly.

He stopped the car where a lane ran up to a white cottage surrounded by sugar maples which appeared to be giving sap with considerable vim. I declined his invitation to dinner, yet lifted my knapsack from the car with real regret. Instinct is sounder than reason, just as expletive is more sincere than formal speech. Although no word of moment had passed between us, I felt as if I were depriving myself of a potential comrade. Heartiness was in his handshake; and although I tried to tell myself, when I had resumed my walk, that the country people are all alike, it did not succeed. I knew that I had left one who was not quite "all alike." If he had not snapped the golden cord of

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education off too soon— My train of sentiment was snapped by a blast from an outrageous horn beneath my very ear. I reacted sideways to the roadside with great agility.

"She can steal up pretty quiet for this kind of a car, can't she?" It was my friend again, leaning out of his Ford and smiling at the broad jump I had made. If he had not smiled I could have shot him. But at him, beaming, I could not glower back.

"Does it still go?" he asked, suddenly turned shy. "What you said about me walking with you?"

"Certainly," I was surprised into saying. "What decided you?"

"Measles. My sister 's got them."

No wonder that he wondered at my mirth. His coming back had irritated me. But the reason was so funny that I felt irritation, dismay, everything vanishing in laughter. His astonishment made it even funnier.

"It 's queer ma takes it so hard," he said after a while, "if it 's as funny as all that."

I told him, with some effort, what the benevolent germs had already done for me. I also took occasion to paint for him pictures of roughing it so vivid that nothing might surprise him unfavorably on the trip, if he still felt in the mood for going.

"It 's exploring that I 'd like," he suggested, when I had done my best.

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Remembering his mechanisms, I believed him. So I told him what clothes to have his mother throw out the window for him, and set the hour for the morrow's departure. Then I turned again toward Woodstock, richer by one traveling companion, genus homo, species American, but variety unknown. The adventure had begun, and it was but little past noon.

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CHAPTER II

WOODSTOCK AND THE OVERLOOK

THE village of Woodstock is the sort of charming, delicious place that a guide-book would call a community, the inhabitants a town, and New Yorkers a spot. It is in reality a hamlet, which is short for hamelet, a place of little homes. And the hame countree never gathered together prettier cottages on its own green hills than cluster about the bridges over the little Sawkill or are sandwiched in the folds of green pastures. Sandwiches, I insist, are appetizing.

One must be very careful, however, in praising Woodstock to its face. Many of the inhabitants are artists, and whenever I suggested that I thought the place was pretty I was assured that I ought not to. I grant the defects, but if I am called on for proof I shall choose a day in June when the meadows are orange with hawk-weed and white with daisy, the marvelous elms by the Tannery Brook in full foliage, the succession of brook-ledges swimming with water in a leisurely fall before the old Riseley place—a day when the

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little white studios gleam through the trees up the hill, and the great protecting range of the Overlook looks near. I shall take the judges there on such a day, and if they are not deaf to the warble of wrens, dulled to the scent of clover, and blind to the play of light and shade, I shall win my case. Woodstock is wealthy in small change, and showers it hospitably around.

Woodstock, moreover, is no ordinary village where the one street is swamped by a surge of farmland and the inhabitants are moored to the milking-stool for life. It is a village through which sweep sane sturdy undercurrents of rural life, and, in addition, two tides of outside influence. One tide is of art, rising to the masterpieces produced there by Birge Harrison. The other is the foam of Greenwich village fantasy. Wherever real artists gather the pseudo delight to flock.

From the farmers I heard funny tales. A reassuring thing was the amusement they seemed to get out of the procession of *poseurs,* the value they attached to the presence of the genuine. One fine old man who had followed many a furrow told me with glee of the era of stockingless girls, the era of brother's clothes on sister, the season of bobbed hair. He was enthusiastic about the Maverick festivals, the stone-quarry concerts. He had only kindly words for those who were in earnest about

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Photograph by William F. Kriebel

"Dark Lines of Widening Torrent"

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Photograph by William F. Kriebel

KNAPSACK AND SHOE-LEATHER

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"their bit o' brushin'." He subscribed to Mr. Hervey White's "Plowshare," the Woodstock magazine. It was a refreshing incident, this finding a man who, in most of the other farm communities of our land, would have limited his interests to the price of eggs or local politics, but who, once subject to the play of creative forces, responded to their charm and worth. Thus once more was the artist justified.

That afternoon I luckily fell in with an illustrator whose circulation is in the million, one of the small group of kindred spirits who stay in Woodstock the calendar round. Truly there is virtue in a place where the twice lucky residents can pursue their professions in a veritable refuge of delight, and yet not lose touch with the great city at the other end of the river. He took me many miles up into the valleys, and from behind the wind-shield I saw mills that could have talked of Whigs and Tories, streams that murmured behind their veils of ice, and ever-opening valleys clad in a purple mist of hard-wood forest. I was told about Mink Hollow of unplacid fame, given a view of Cooper's Lake, a pond of respectable dimensions. We drove by an establishment whose owner, evidently not hungering for calm, sought to relieve the unfretfulness of his domain by sign-posting his garden-corner, "Broadway" and "42nd Street." He had probably flown the city to

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escape the uproar. For us poor wingless creatures the promised land is forever where we are n't. And when we fly? I wonder if then ambition shall taste satiety. Shall we be more restless, or will the measure of the entirety attained quiet us down to some solider enjoyment than mere flight? Ever since Columbus brewed his dreams over the travels of Marco Polo, we have been chiefly concerned with getting somewhere else. As we rounded turn after turn, passed lovely valley after lovely valley, I began to wonder why, on the morrow, I was to start off with an unknown youth on a speculative journey. In the Sawkill, in the little Beaverkill, in every silver hollow there were more fish and more fresh thoughts than I could garner up in many a moon.

There were to be two answers. Months later I found one in the thrill of enjoyment I had in coming back to friends. That evening I found the other. Before a fragrant fire of apple boughs we talked late, as new acquaintance will, and discovered to each other (as new acquaintance will) such confidences as a year of other places or established friendship might not have brought forth. We saw that, although we were two men of different ages, different businesses, and with different goals, we were but on different stages of the same old road. And, though this could not have much of a discovery to either, yet there was great com-

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fort in the checking up of mutual reminiscence, in the uncovering of common pitfalls.

This warming to fresh sympathies is the heart of travel. Whether one voyages in the Catskills or in the Mountains of the Moon matters only to the purse. The enjoyment is the same—the broaching of new casks of life. Both the Andes and the Adirondacks are cold stone, and to travel vast distances just to observe huger heaps of that betokens a fantastic judgment. It is the number of hearts disclosed or the depth delved into one that makes a trip successful. The only advantage of travel in the wilderness is that with fewer people your eye is clearer and you accept nothing from the habit of accepting it. Otherwise your home town, your street, your house, would be the completest stage you 'd need. It takes genius to travel in a city. Life there is too rich to be drunk swiftly of, and most have not the patience to travel slowly. They taste here and taste there, and travel on. But in the country, particularly in the back country of our great East, any amateur can enrich his trip. Any tyro in the art of living, if he but have some sympathy with folk, can exchange confidences, can ballast his faith in humanity, and put on ten pounds at the same time. Had I not ventured to Woodstock I should have been less rich by several friends.

It was long past the bed-time of the quarter

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moon when we recognized that it was ours. It was even further past sun-up when I came down to the breakfast which, in that pleasant country, marches gallantly to a stern conclusion of hot-cakes and maple syrup, attacking which every man must do his duty and at least one more. There is no quarter allowed.

Punctually we met, my acquaintance of the Ford and I, in front of the church. He was "trimmed down for leggin' it," as he termed our pilgrimage, and we set out in a nipping air well satisfied with life and a little curious about the intimacies ahead, each somewhat shy about beginning them. I asked about the church, which is really very picturesque and piquing to the fancy, and Vreeland had told me that it was at least six generations old, when a breezy lad passed us and called out, "Hello, Brute; where you makin' for?"

"The other side o' hell," my friend replied. "Want to go part way?" The briskness of the reply startled me.

"I shall not be dull," I thought, and settled down to enjoy the trip.

"Is Brute the name they gave you in the church, or a nickname?" I asked.

"No; teacher gave it me. She said it was in Shakespeare—short for Brutus, you know. She 'd always giggle when she 'd say it. But she was

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awful silly. Teachers are n't mostly like that, are they?"

"Mostly," I replied. It looked as if the intimacies were about to begin; and, as I did not intend them to be premature, I had the conversation revert to the antiquities of Woodstock. Its fortunes had gone up and down. In 1728 a Martin Snyder had settled, with his ten sons and uncounted daughters, not far from the spot, and his progeny had gradually enveloped the wilderness. Even in the memory of Brute, some of his neighbors quarreled in Dutch when under extreme provocation. For a while tanneries flourished up the brooks. The great hemlocks were felled and stripped and left to rot, only the bark being utilized. Such reckless days brought on reaction. Then there was a period of blue-stone quarrying up on the Overlook, the great flat stones being used for the edges of city gutters, for flagging pavement and doorsills. That era passed. Rather quickly the remaining timber was used up, the game shot out, the streams fished out. With the passing of fire-wood in great quantities passed the glass business which had grown up, sand having been brought from Jersey so that the fuel might be utilized. And now the fields were fit, at last, for crops and cows.

It is a mile from the village to the foot of the

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mountain, two miles of very genuine climb to the resting-place called Meads', and two more to the Overlook House. And there is no day too hot to make the exertion not worth while. In spring, even, the sun can be very earnest on that southern slope, but there are always wild fruits to enrich the way. The sun that had beguiled Brute and me upon the road soon shifted the responsibility for the day. Flurries of snow swept down upon us from the pass. Our early spring had suddenly lost its equilibrium and was falling back into the arms of winter. Bits of sunshine, pale and distraught, were racing thin and far over the dun landscape —the fragments of our glorious morning. We had paused to get our several breaths when I noticed a man turning off the road a little ahead. I requested a direction or two, and by some slip of the conversation I found that I was talking with a man who had lived with William Morris and had known Ruskin well. Such are the surprises of Woodstock.

It was on another very different day, when the gardens at Byrdcliffe were rich with poppies and larkspur and the Persian rose, that Mr. Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead showed me about his mountainside. There he had intended that the families who had caught the flame of his ambition were to live. There they were to weave by hand, to fashion out their pleasure in pottery, and to work

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in metals. Their children were to be taught to use their hands until they had reached college age. Health and simplicity and the genuine riches of life were to be the rewards for all.

Byrdcliffe could not compete with Patterson. The factory is stronger than the hand that taught it, and Byrdcliffe is a shattered dream. But Mr. Whitehead's beautiful pottery is none the less beautiful, his nature nowise embittered by the shattering of the dream. In a room of his home hangs a coast-scene of Birge Harrison's. Its shimmering beauty I shall remember always. I should think that in the same way the beautiful endeavor at Byrdcliffe must stay always in the memory of Woodstock, making it a better village than it would otherwise have been.

In the snow-veiled pastures who could conceive that buttercups and wild strawberries were but two months off! Up we struggled to Meads', and warmed our noses in the kitchen of that hospitable house. From the porch in clear weather there is a view, flanked by hillsides, that sweeps out over Woodstock, lights up in the shine of Ashokan Reservoir, and darkens to the southwest in the forests of the Peekamose country. The house sits comfortably in the hollow, and from the other end you look down over a pond into a deep wooded valley, sheltered on the north by the four peaks of the Indian Head range. To Brute and me they

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spoke in terms of grim cold. From the passes advanced veils of snow, and when the onslaught slackened the dark mountain-heads seemed to be threatening new squalls.

From Meads' the road runs steeply up to the Overlook House. It is a consistent climb, and will have its effect on man or beast or motor; but all three accomplish it. On the way up trees obstruct the view, except occasionally to the left down into the beautifully wooded valley. But from the porch of the hotel the world lies visible.

I cannot recall having seen an advertisement of this hostelry, but it is not hard to imagine the powerful adjectives which the management must have collected to describe that view. In summer, except on rare days, a blue haze narrows the spectacle to a radius of fifty miles. In the clearer atmosphere of winter it is very impressive. The Ashokan, the Hudson, highlands in seven States, the vast shoulder of earth, soar away from one. At last the earth is partially appreciable. It may not seem a sphere, but so much of it is seen that you realize that you are on an *Earth*. That is an extraordinary feeling. Go up higher mountains, and you lose contact with the globe. But this plain at your feet is yet near enough to show its pattern. When you rode through it, it seemed mostly farmland; now it shows mainly wood. To the west rise the Catskills, range beyond range,

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until the blue calm of summer frames the view.

No summer visitors could have imagined the scene that opened to my journeyman and me for the few moments between squalls. The wind seemed to be gathering strength. For the space of a few seconds the cloud shadows would fly over the edge. Then the sun would stream after them. Out it would pour along the level plain below. Those distances below us were remote and cold. And the mountains at our backs were bleak with trailing gray, except when the April strength of sun overtook the February carnival of snow and overcame it. Then the flame of life seemed to flare for a glad moment before being overwhelmed by the next onslaught.

The great single fact was the pressure of the wind during the squalls. With its broad hand the gale pushed against the exposed flanks of the hotel until the cables that fastened it to the earth tightened and sang, and I began to wonder how long mere wood and nails were going to survive. It was a bold architect who planted such an expanse of board on such an exposed perch. In winter's heaviest gales the weight of wind must be enormous. Even on our day of ruthless weather, when the great blasts, tawny with driven flakes, swept down upon us, roaring as they came, we felt there were chances of not remaining attached to terra firma. It was as exhilarating as a run at sea,

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sails glistening and rail a-wash. And I was secretly delighted that the youth beside me was held by the fascination of it, too.

"Would n't it fool you!" he exclaimed, after a while, as we stood near the brink looking down into the indefinite depths at our feet. "It certainly would fool you. To think I never took the bother to come up, and me looking at this old white hotel all these steens of years."

"How does it hit you?"

"There 's not a word to cover it. I used to hear those art-painters talk about it till I guessed it 'd make me sick. They did, anyway. They 're mostly high-dome pussy-cats. They 'd say, 'Oh! was n't it grand! Was n't it colossal!' "

"Well, what do you think of it? Were n't the high-dome pussy-cats right?" I tried not to sound amused.

"Absolutely," he admitted meekly, "I 've got to go back and slobber just like them, 'Ain't it grand! Ain't it colossal!' if they 're the words meaning what you can't take in and wish you could. I 'd like to watch the thing out."

I was beginning to like him. There are certain things essential in the friend who is to walk by one's side through rough weather as well as fine—generosity, a sense of humor, a sense of beauty, honesty, a liking for adventure. The man that I had partly divined in that first roadside meeting

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was beginning to come true. Already I knew that I could trust this youthful native far; even as far, possibly, as he had picturesquely forecast our journey—"to the other side o' hell."

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CHAPTER III

MEANDERING BY THE MAP

I, TOO, would have liked to watch the thing out. But there was another consideration besides the fleeting beauties of the roaring landscape. Remaining on our unprotected perch involved freezing to death; and, as we were already blue with the persistent blasts, we reluctantly left the dumb hotel to their vengeance and sought a little woodland harbor for our lunch.

A path rises to the northeast from the building and skirts the cliff. On one side rises the forest, on the other falls the abyss. There are a thousand of the finest opportunities for self-destruction, but Brute and I felt very well satisfied with life and did not avail ourselves. Instead, in a sheltered semicircle of young spruce we made a little fire and in its golden circle devoured food.

Then we got out the map. Maps are as invaluable as meals to any person who intends to enjoy the Catskill country. The legend of the large-scale masterpieces is a fascinating short story to the man who walks. For it must be understood at the outset that the Catskill country is able to respond to the exactions of the experienced as well

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as to the simpler pleasures of the amateur traveler. It is as versatile a pleasure-land as one may wish for. It provides motor roads of excellence through an extensive woodland. There are bears for the hunter, and hotels for his wife. Old men who have never seen a railroad live but a few miles from resplendent garages.

Time was when the Catskills were about the only mountain country available for the fortnight vacation. The White Mountains were a little far away, and the Adirondacks an unexplored wilderness. The West was unknown. Now it is but a day from Broadway to Montreal. A trip to be talked about means at least Australia or the Ural Mountains. Therefore the Catskills are passed by. They are actually getting wilder. There are more deer in them than ever before, as many bear. Fewer people put up at the big hotels than when Queen Victoria was planning her Jubilee. Consequently a man with a map in his hand can plunge into as wild a wild as most men want four or five hours after he has left his taxicab in New York. The map is an important consideration: the Government map the only thing (*cf.* Appendix).

From the safety of a train platform it is easy to under-estimate the difficulty of cross-country travel through the Catskill woods. Once swallowed by the forest, which is of second growth, very thick and very much alike, the hill-shoulder

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that you judged would be so easy to follow becomes a maze of distracting side-slopes; the peak for which you were making apparently has ceased to exist; and the summits are so long and flat that you never know when you have reached the exact top. But the Government maps show every trail, every road, every roadside house, streamlet, ford, and spring. In planning out the day's progress they will inform you as to whether you will find secondary roads or the superior roads of State. With the contour lines and a compass, cross-woods travel becomes secure. Every vagary of the slope, each knoll, each rill of water, is there to identify your location.

Following the map soon became an obsession with Brute. His keen interest in affairs of accuracy was stimulated by the unfailing way in which these sheets of paper delivered us to our destination. When our supper depended on the one way out of some vast labyrinth like the slopes of Panther Mountain or the featureless expanses about the head-waters of the Beaverkill, there was supreme satisfaction in being able to say, "That way lies a summit, this a ledge. I must follow east-southeast for a mile to reach that brook, which I shall know is the right one because of the woodsman's road beside it."

It was, then, with something of this satisfaction that Brute and I, on our snowy ledge, plotted our

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next move. To be sure, while there was a diversity of interest, there was a paucity of possibility. Although in our nook we were safe from the gale, it flew roaring above us at intervals and shook down a tinsel of light snow. On a summer's day we would have taken time to investigate Echo Lake and to climb Indian Head on our way to the Platte-kill Clove. But we decided to edge around the cliff until we struck the road and follow that to supper.

Indeed, at that altitude of three thousand feet there was slight evidence of the thaw that had been raging in our city streets. The snow beside the trail was upwards of two feet deep. In spots where the sun had basked on the open ledges fell cascades of ice. Everywhere sat winter, worn and senile, but capable of making our progress difficult. And at the rate the cold was increasing we could take any pace without much danger of arriving in a lather.

On a clear day in winter or summer that walk from the Overlook to Plaat Clove affords extraordinary views over the Hudson. The road was once used for carriages, but nature has restaked her claim. Washouts, new trees, deserted flagstone quarries, decaying cabins mark the re-occupancy by the wilderness. It is doubly lonely now, and the porcupine, the fox, the woodchuck, and the bear openly share the territory with their shyer

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neighbors. Several times we had to avoid slipping into the depths by going on all fours across a river of ice. It grew fairly late, and we were tired with the snow-tramping and wind-buffeting before we stumbled down some long slopes, crossed a rickety bridge, and entered the scattered village of Plaat Clove.

For the past hour our conversation had specialized on things to eat, and we had determined to pitch upon a house that had a prosperous air. At length, after passing one or another because of some defect in its shingling or the paint, we knocked upon a well-to-do looking door which seemed capable of offering to us at least three courses, if not a salad. The light from its window shone straight to the heart, for night had suddenly fallen and we were not yet acclimated to the feeling of homelessness. A little girl opened the door about wide enough to admit a lizard, and through this aperture I ventured to project my wishes. In a minute the little girl came back, said mama said something, and slammed the door upon our three-course dreams. What a noise that door made! It seemed to reverberate through our hollow interiors. Brute spoke in the vernacular.

"Gosh!" he said. "Now we know what a spider feels like."

Without commenting on the sensitiveness of

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Photograph by William F. Kriebel

A Sawkill Memory

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SPLUTTERKILL, SPLATTERKILL

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that insect, I should say that I felt very flat.

"The next house is yours," I said, "and for Pete's sake put your foot in the door."

The next house would have been passed by earlier, for the rain-spout was broken; but our three courses had now come down to two and a bed. This time a woman answered our knock. Brute's voice, coming from such a broad-chested youth, sounded ludicrously meek:

"Please, ma'am, is it too late to get some supper?"

The lamplight shone on his good-looking, wind-reddened face, and his appearance must have won over anything short of shrew; but the woman said shortly:

"Yes, supper 's all put away; besides, there is n't much in the house. But up the road maybe they 'll give you something."

"No, I don't think they will," I interrupted, "and we really won't eat much if—"

"Up the road—" she began.

Brute turned, without a word; but no master of the unspoken drama could have performed an oath more delicately with a simple gesture of a presented back. I tried the Christian device of thanking the lady as heartily as if she had presented us with two roast turkeys; but it affected her not a bit, and I hurried to catch up with my enraged companion. On that cold road there seemed no heat

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left in the universe, but we felt not its loss. We burned to have at these fed but unfeeding people. We longed to demolish a house or two. We pictured the pleasure of setting one on fire, warming our fingers over the embers while the late householders cowered before us and offered us fried potatoes and custard pie. It put us in spirit, and suddenly Brute laughed aloud.

"You can't blame them. You 've an awful hungry look. I 've got an idea, and I bet you we 're fed at the next place. I 'll manage it."

"How?" I inquired.

"You wait. All you have to do is eat."

There was some doubt at first as to whether there would be a next house. When it appeared, it looked dark and wind-beaten, unpromising for even a crust. But up the lane we trudged, I lagging. This time a man came.

"Good evening, sir," began Brute, apparently with all confidence. "Could I have a drink of water?"

The man looked somewhat surprised, but, as he could n't well refuse, bade us enter. I registered a point for Brute. The water came.

"Would it bother you," continued the boy, "to sell us a couple of pieces of bread? We 'll spread them ourselves."

"Like a little meat with them?" asked the man.

"Yes; and if there are any potatoes that could

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be fried easily, and perhaps a pinch of tea— It was pretty cold on the mountain. We 're prepared to pay."

"How far 'a' you come?" asked the man, putting down the lamp, which was a good omen. "Strikes me you fellers 'd like a real meal. Ma," he called into the next room, "here 's a couple of fellers who 've had jest raisins and chocolate for their dinner. I guess you kin git 'em up a little something."

"I guess I kin," she said. And I guess she did. And if it had n't been strictly forbidden I 'd put down her name in capitals. For the "little something" began with a four-egg omelet and wound up with some wild strawberry jam, with our original three courses in between. We sat about the stove and talked till nearly ten o'clock. And that is dissipation for those who rise at five.

Before we went to bed the good dame warmed us a cherry-pit bag, against the rigors of arctic sheets. The discovery of that cherry-pit bag was alone worth the long trudge across the Plattekill heights. Cherry-stones thoroughly heated in an oven will keep their heat all night. Before we slept we laughed once more over the strategy that had gained us our entry. And that was a rule of the road which we applied many times thereafter: *If you want something big, begin with something easy and work up.*

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CHAPTER IV

THE WALL OF MANITOU

BREAKFAST was no betrayer of the expectations raised by supper. The Good Dame of Plattekill Clove, (as our hostess is registered in heaven,) brought in buckwheat cakes that had to have a cover on them to keep them down, and there was nothing at all inconspicuous about their size.

The weather did not do so well by us. The air tides were still setting in from the north; the tinselly snow was still flurrying; and, since there was no likelihood of a view from any of the surrounding points of vantage, we made a virtue of abnegation and wanted none.

There is at the top of the Clove a gorge called by the ambitious inhabitants the Grand Cañon. We visited this, and found that to loiter down it, to really digest the formations and appreciate the trees, is a matter of many hours. At the very top, in the Devil's Kitchen, as their fancy names it, there is a scene that distresses all artists who have not brought along the means of reproducing it. The road passes over the gorge by a small arch so

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beautifully rounded and bastioned with rock that it is a little sermon on the value of doing the ordinary well and with an eye to beauty. The brook sings a little lament as it goes through this arch: it is leaving lovely fields and is about to be lost in a series of mad plunges. When we saw it first it had whitened the entire cavern with frost. In the spring it riots down those great stone steps. Our guide, she who keeps the charming Inn near by, said that in great freshets it was master of the gorge, filling it with foam and noise and demolishing the stairways, which they annually rebuild.

In this microscopic Grand Cañon grow primeval trees that can never be cut. Above, boulders lean over, and are ready to pounce down when the magic command is given. Dark dens lean back into the mountain from which skew-eyed goblins can be drafted into Puck's midnight gang. On a day of dark bluster, with thin snow sifting down the while, this gorge becomes almost sinister and oppressive. But in June, when the sun beats on the fields of hawk-weed and daisy and the roads are hot with dust, this place is a cool refuge, a wonderland for wandering in. Occasionally the scene opens and you look out over a green floor of light-tipped hemlocks down the Clove. Far out to sea—the blue sea of distant counties—farmlands lie in the haze of heat; but always you are buoyed by the cool breeze from down the ravines.

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Water runs everywhere, mosses drip, and some leisurely bird warbles in content.

In this gorge there are many waterfalls. The Ghost's broad veil is well named and very real at dusk. But Brute and I were menaced by the icicles hanging overhead to the length of twenty feet and sharpened to a dagger's point. We were invited to destruction by the smooth aprons of inclined ice across which we sidled on all fours. Half-frozen, and with our appreciations benumbed by a thousand difficulties we were scarcely able to give to the nuances of beauty their full due. But my memory tells me this: that gorge, unadvertised and not very famous, is the finest miniature of wilderness in the Catskills, and the beauty of its trees, lichened rocks, cascades, and glimpses of the plain will repay a lengthy visit at any season. If one does not go to be awed, he will remain to be charmed. The enjoyment of the Catskills depends on the same point of view. If one visits them as one may visit the Canadian Rockies, in the expectation of having all of one's big emotions drawn out and played upon, there will be hideous disappointment. There is nothing big about the Catskills. They are as comfortable as home. They were created, not for observation-cars, but for bungalow porches. Yet they are not so little. Indeed, while Brute and I sat that night in the kitchen of the Good Dame's, listening to her hus-

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band tell of the wildcats he had trapped, they seemed very wild and very extensive.

No two people to-day will agree as to what are the Catskills. We came upon mountaineers living to the west of Belle Ayre, in the heart of the wildest portion of the woods, who disclaimed any connection, while still farther west we came upon a village in the plain who contended for it. Even the origin of the name is still disputed. Some would have it derived from the creatures of even-song. But the etymology contradicts that. The plural of cats in Dutch is *katten,* or at a pinch *katte,* but never *kats.* By a confusing coincidence, the bay lynx, which once made so free with most of the colonial forest, chose these woods for his last fortress. Even to-day they are more abundant in the mountains surrounding Slide, Hunter, and Peekamose than they are in the larger Adirondack cover.

But it must be remembered that, at first, one little stream was called Cats' Kill, which was named in honor of the poet of Brouwershaven. In his day Jacob Cats cut considerable figure at the Dutch bar. He was made the Chief Magistrate of Middleburg and Dordrecht, the Grand Pensionary of West Friesland, and finally the Keeper of the Great Seal of Holland. He is found in our libraries to-day. At the very time that Hendrik Hudson was eating roast dog with his red-faced hosts

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near the outlet of the brook that was to be Cats' Kill, Mr. Cats was penning amatory emblems behind his native dikes. He wrote "Sinne en Minne Beelden," a collection of moralizations and worldly wisdom, perhaps derived from his own experience, as in the following:

Nineteen nay-says o' a maiden are ha'f a grant.

By his indefatigable industry he turned out nineteen volumes of this sort of thing, with poems which a critic of the time declared to be characterized by "simplicity, rich fancy, clearness and purity of style, and excellent moral tendency."

With a record like that, it is small wonder that the map-makers, half distraught for names for the myriad brooks of the region, should decide to call one after the Grand Pensionary, in the same way that they were naming Block Island after Adrian Blok and Kaap May for Admiral May. So Cats got his Kill, and the mountains in which it rose were soon called the Catskills, the name spreading until it took in first the whole region north of the Esopus, then the still higher group at the head of which stands Slide, and finally some of the out-running ranges to the west.

Brute and I covered, in our several trips, a block of highland country occupying about sixteen hundred square miles, all of which has a right, by origin, contour, similarity of surface, and inter-

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relation, to be known as the Catskills. The limits are roughly as follows: On the east the nearly vertical wall extending from High Point by the Reservoir parallel to the Hudson, and about ten miles from it to Mt. Pisgah about thirty miles north. On the southwest from High Point along the valley north of the Shawangunk Range to Napanoch, west to Livingston Manor, to include the wild region of small trees and small ponds. On the west a rough line from Livingston Manor up to Stamford, through Arena, Andes, and Bovina Center. On the north by an arc from Stamford to Livingstonville. There pretends to be nothing dogmatic about our trip, the limits we reached, or boundaries suggested. But this rough block of elevated territory constitutes a unit for adventure and exploration. The blue line on the State Forest map follows about the same boundaries on the east and south, but has not included the interesting but more open country in the neighborhood of Mt. Utsayantha at Stamford.

This great isolated citadel of upland appealed to the Indians as something extraordinary and to be accounted for. They said that Manitou had erected it as a defense from hostile spirits. As a citadel the region made its first appeal to me. Any person passing along the Hudson, and seeing this dim, impressive wall of rock through the lowland haze, must be reminded, I should think, of

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that legend. Rising abruptly from the valley floor and continuing with high rampart and tremendous buttresses, it watches over the peace of the plain. The great wall is no longer grim, as in Manitou's day, for it is usually veiled with mists of blue. It is the gigantic memoir of some far-off time.

This citadel is easily visualized. Picture the eastern rampart, three thousand feet above the farmland, running for thirty miles along the river, towered at intervals and at both ends by massive Gibraltars, broken only a few times by giant causeways which lead up into the central fortress. You have then the aspect from the East.

The central fortress is divided into the northern Catskills, with Hunter Mountain as the chief height, and the southern Catskills, with its group of mountains culminating in Slide, both peaks being a little higher than four thousand feet. The Esopus Creek runs between these groups from west to east. The fortress has no pronounced western wall. Valleys lead out into the plateau country. In the north this high region, only slightly under two thousand feet, is rich with pasture. In the south it is still covered with forest and small lakes.

This region—bounded on the east by the Hudson plain, on the north by fertile farmland, on the west by a ridgy terrain that is to rise again in the mountains of Pennsylvania, and on the south

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by other farmlands—was the fortified abode of the Great Spirit. It became the storehouse of the early settlers, who took from it furs and game, hemlock bark, timber riches, slate, and who finally moved into its sheltering valleys. This region is still a citadel. In winter, though but a hundred miles from the center of the world, it is as isolated as a frontier. In summer into this capacious fortress withdraw thousands of city people seeking refuge from heat and the stress of streets.

It is a refuge apart. Looking down from the great rampart on the ordinary world below, many a man has thanked Manitou for this retreat. Not only the casual transportation facilities but even the geology of the region contributes to the feeling of separation. The citadel is an anomaly amid its neighboring mountains.

In one of those leisurely ages some 43,000,000 years ago, as some geologist has bravely computed, there was a gulf in the vast Devonian sea which had thrust itself between the Adirondack Plateau of Laurentide memory and the Green Mountain Range. Into this gulf poured silt. Its bottom subsided for about a mile, and the sediment continued to settle in layers until the coal-making era was about to commence. By then the bottom of this particular gulf had heaved above the ocean level and became the Catskills. The early rise accounts for the absence of coal in the Catskill

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region, for these lands never went under water again. Hence all the formations and discoveries can be allotted to the subcarboniferous period. Even before the Catskills had entirely emerged, the interior of the continent had begun to rise, and this accounts for the slight southern dip of the strata.

The succeeding age, the coal age, came to a conclusion with a tremendous upheaval. The force of this upheaval caused the formation of the main ranges of the Appalachian system, and doubled the size of our continent. Most mountains are caused by the buckling of the strata, the warping of the earth-skin; but the Catskills, despite the rigors of the surrounding performance, remained unconvulsed. Isolated, hardened, they kept a level head, and are so to-day. You find outcropping ledges, an absence of pointed peaks, a multitude of waterfalls, and you realize that erosion has done it all.

There is another difference, too, between the Catskill fortress and the surrounding mountains. They did not succumb to the ice age. All the true ranges of upheaval, like the Appalachians, run from southwest to northeast. The Catskill ranges run from southeast to northwest. So, when the great Glacier gouged out the Adirondacks and kindred regions, damming the valleys and sweeping easily down the southwestern avenues, it could

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no more than slop over the transverse Catskill ridges. In this case the Catskills' strength was their loss. They have no large lakes.

For all the hardihood that had withstood the ordeal by primeval fire and the assault by ice, the Citadel had finally to compromise with water. It surrendered to the tiny stream. The tooth of rills has gnawed out the vitals of the proud plateau until the Kaaterskill Clove, the Stony Clove, and the other valleys made it possible for the well-rounded Dutch to conquer the interior.

This was the stronghold that Brute and I were entering with our rover's commission. From this mountain fastness, towering above the Shawangunk, the Green Mountains, the nursling hills of the Delaware, and rising to the chin of the elder Adirondacks, we were to look down on a rich green land. We thought that we were taking possession of it. In reality it was taking possession of us. With every step we took we delivered ourselves into its hand. For it came to exercise upon us the only power that can conquer, assimilate, and ruthlessly possess forever,—the power of perfect beauty.

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CHAPTER V

APOSTASY OF A CHEERFUL LIAR

THE map had disclosed three possibilities of travel from Plaat Clove to Twilight Park. But only the morrow could disclose its sky. Our host, who claimed an intimacy with the adjacent weather, predicted a cessation of the snow-flurries during the night. But with the north wind still doing its laborious worst, we weighed each route with the care employed by those who travel thoroughly—and have nothing else till bedtime.

The most interesting way led along the eastern parapet of mountain that runs about two thousand feet above the river valley. If the weather should clear, the contour lines promised us a magnificent off-look at a hundred places. Two miles north High Peak's shoulder slants in a human way to the place where the epaulette should be, and then drops abruptly, giving a view of an immense amphitheater. This route along the continuing bluff was also short as well as scenic. At the thought of its concise elegance we wished our host well with his weather.

The second road led down through the Clove to

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the base of the Peak's main mass, skirted that, and went up through the Kaaterskill Clove. If the incompetent squalls should turn into a genuine storm, we could take that.

The third route marched up to the apex of the triangle at Tannersville and then down to Twilight, very much King-of-France style. This was long but on the level.

The morning came from force of habit, and we awoke, but not to the sun. The same corpse-colored clouds; the same northern gusts. We dressed shiveringly in the Good Dame's guest-room; Brute's face, a vision of pale blue complicated with red prominences. Only the knowledge that heaven (the kitchen range) was below kept my fingers from freezing to the clothes they tried to button. If there is any virtue to be got from pioneering, we were virtuous from the epidermis in. But there is some potency in a quire of hot-cakes. The Good Dame surpassed herself. We listened again while her husband told his tale: certainly clear by the afternoon and warmer anyway. So we stayed and helped the man repair his trout tackle, for the new season was but three long wishes off.

Dinner was the plump affair which was the pretty custom of this family: a pork roast being the axis around which revolved subsidiary dishes in a pleasant, planetary way. Speaking in the

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same spirit of parable that describes good little boys as composed of sugar plums, one could say that the Catskills were made of roast pork. A porkless day in those mountains means a dinnerless day. Every household is not considered complete unless equipped with a dynasty of squealers. The procession, in winter at least, runs serenely on—sty, rafter, and the dinner-table—and a day without pig would be as disconsolate an affair as a week without a Saturday night. But there need be no feeling of monotony. There is no animal so versatile and none, I am sure, whose treatment is so diversified. On our trip the gamut of preparation ranged in taste from venison to whale.

When our host, after dinner, had postponed the clearing until the morrow or the day after, we felt that we must leave, compromising on the road toward Tannersville. With reluctance we set out, but that was soon forgotten in the pleasure of the road again. With our knapsacks on our backs and the rhythm of the road in our hearts, there came over me, at least, that sense of well-being it is hard to get in any other way than on foot. I did not know Brute well enough yet to decipher what language the wild country spoke to him, but I was glad to see that at least he did not wear his emotion, like a riband, around his sleeve. And so well had we begun to work in double harness that, as we set out along the opening valley, it seemed impossi-

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Photograph by E. Lyron Miller

THE ONTI ORA

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MOUNTAINSIDE—SANTA CRUZ PARK

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ble that we should have known each other so short a while, even though of experience so variously full. It is the same way, however, with all walking trips. Close to earth everything is of importance. In the first few miles of the walker's day there is a sense of well-being to promote good-fellowship, in the last few a sense of comradeship to mitigate fatigue. As Brute said once, "With the fellow you like, you can walk from anywhere at all to anywhere else and never mind the distance." And I might add that the surest test of the right friend is the ability to go nowhere-in-particular with him and still be interested and happy.

Our afternoon was to be remembered chiefly for its dramatic close, but still, despite the muscular wind and the unleavened clouds, I shall have no trouble thinking back with pleasure on the body of the march.

As the valley widened we had glimpses at times through the variable veil of snow of Indian Head and Sugarloaf dimly on the left, of Round Top and High Peak, the splendid culmination of the great ground swell, looming indistinctly on the right. What sort of introduction to these Catskill ranges is best, I have never yet decided. Should one have all the possible beauty first as in those dazzling firework bombs that explode in showers of stars? Or should one get acquainted by degrees and with mounting enthusiasm to the final appre-

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ciation, as in the crescendo of a rocket's flight? I have seen this valley shining in the dews of a spring morning and glowing with the supremest glories of October, hot with the hazy breathlessness of a July noon, and whipped with winter winds. Yet through the half-luminous snow-dust of that first acquaintance the mountains took on an eerie height they do not in reality possess, and in that light I idealize them yet.

It is in this valley that one of the strange tricks which rivers seem to delight in is played. Waters falling at the head of the Plattekill Clove all reach the Hudson. One stream reaches it in ten merry miles. The other in a hundred and seventy-five. The course of the Plattekill Creek is the course of a thousand cascades. In a couple of miles it falls a couple of thousand feet and loafs the rest of the way across the narrow plain. The other is the Schoharie. It is hard to tell where it rises, which is the parent spring, for in the short six miles there are more than thirty ravines each contributing a rill to make the brook. But I should imagine that the stream on Indian Head might have the credit, for its source is farthest east. From there the water runs west and north, east in the Mohawk and south from Albany. Some day some poet will wander down the full length of this enchanting stream and tell its adventures for the inland water babies. In that short life from Plaate Clove to the

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sea, its water meets all the vicissitudes of longer streams.

The hastening afternoon and a re-survey of the map were responsible for our decision to cut off across a spur of Round Top, called Clum Hill. This would shorten the way by two or three miles, which were to be missed very slightly, and would give us a view of many lands. Unfortunately the road chosen can never reveal what was missed on the way not taken. But by re-routeing destiny we were treated to two experiences which, for superlativeness of sort, the way by Tannersville would have been hard put to it to excel.

Clum Hill is strategic ground for the view-seeker. Any time of day pays interest on the climb. But morning is best. Then Round Top is in relief, and shadows spread down the ravines of Sugarloaf and Indian Head, Twin Mountain and Plateau, that would rend a cubist with delight. Doubtless from such a scene it was that the first Art Fiend got his idea. Certainly the triangles, quadrilaterals, and parallelopipeds of the new art are all to be found cast in fascinating shadow into the gulfs. The facts that they are cast into the gulfs should give the cubists pause, but there they are, bold blocks of beauty to lend strength to the airier lines and color of the rest of the landscape. The thing the cubist artists forget to do is to put in the rest of the landscape.

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From Clum Hill the valley of the Schoharie narrows to the northwest, where the Hunter Range and the East Jewett Range lose themselves in blue. Below to the north lies Tannersville, and still farther north rise the protecting slopes of Parker Mountain with Onteora Park sitting beneath its chin. But the sight that makes Clum Hill one of the imperative delights to see is the upper loveliness of the Schoharie guarded by Indian Head and his mountain kin. Here and there on the bottomland the hayfields shine against the maple woods. Here and there the blue smoke of noon dinners (pork chops and apple butter) floats across sunny roofs. Elka Park nestles beneath Spruce Top, and back of all the big Plateau Mountain comforts one with its solidity. Morning, noon, or evening there are more rational pleasures to be got from sitting comfortably on Clum with your back against a tree than in many a whole day's march.

But when Brute and I first topped that engaging height there was very little thought about sitting. There were no hayfields, no pork chops in the view. The north wind was as sharp as suspicion's tooth. But at that moment was being prepared for us a surprise that was to make amends for the cloudy monotone of squalls, for the leaden ceiling and ragged hangings of the last two days' entertainment. So uniform had been the coloring of the afternoon that we had paid no attention to the

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time. We did not realize that evening was upon us, until, through a tear in the sky-furnishings near the horizon, the sun shone levelly across us. The change was plain magic. In the space of a thrill the world turned the color of a plum preserve. The clouds dripped rose, and the snow drank up the color. The forests shone with rare tintings; only the hemlocks refused the mask of carnival. The long bulk of Plateau Mountain and the receding peaks glowed with a hue that was neither faded carmine nor old lavender. As the scene brightened for an instant everything seemed to swim in the freshet of strange light.

There are spring sunsets so cool, so fragrant, that they make you draw long breaths of peace; and there are midwinter brilliancies that exhilarate you with their strength. But this Arabian Nights' display was different. It was breathless, unannounced, like a universal lightning. It is one thing to watch the slow summer light deepen and fade away; it is quite another to be thrown into a sea of exotic splendor and held down. Art never takes the breath; the circus does. Nature was enjoying one of her rare, sensational moments. Almost at once, as if a spot-light had been removed, the color faded and went out. We had had an experience.

And now we were to have another. There is a farm possessing the near-top of the cleared hill,

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and from the farm a trail runs along and down the northern side of the ridge until, in the course of a couple of miles, it joins the carriage drive into Twilight Park. If we were to take the road to Tannersville and Haines Falls we would have all of four miles to go. Remembering our fortunes of the night before in arriving late for supper, we were unanimous in choosing the shorter route despite the woods, the failing light, the snow. It was a risk, but we were assured at the farm that the trail was easy to follow, being sign-posted every little while, and, as the worldly Brute remarked, the grub was worth the gamble.

We crossed the open fields without difficulty, connected with the trail-end, passed a sign or two of reassurance, and came, as had been predicted, to a sugar-grove. There a youth of fourteen in baggy trousers was preparing for the sugar season by tapping the gray-barked maples with steel spouts. In the grove evening was already loitering.

"Maybe we 'd better go by the road after all," suggested Brute.

"Let 's ask him." We turned off the trail and went over to the boy. "Is it a fairly plain trail to Twilight Park?" I think "fairly" was our undoing.

"Sure," he said in an optimistic treble; "you can't miss it." He gave us the same directions that we had received at the farm and finished with,

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"You can't miss it. Only don't turn off when you get to the thicket. Jes' go right through."

Reinspired, we pushed on. As the slope was northerly, the snow was hard, and we walked rapidly. The woods seemed fairly open, and twice we were assured by signs that we were on the trail, but we saw no thicket. In a few minutes we altered our course, in order to be sure of the thicket. After having set our teeth to go through it, we were anxious to meet it. In another five minutes we were nervous for not having met it.

"Let 's go back and pick it up," suggested Brute. "We dares n't sidestep it." It was rather dark now and difficult to follow our back trail.

After a while, "This is n't a trail; it 's a creek."

It was. I went through the ice. We edged up the slope a little.

"Do you suppose Twilight Park 's any darker 'n this?" asked Brute. "It must 'a' been a blind man began it." All humor is of the soil, and when Brute relapsed into the speech of the soil I knew that he was feeling the humor of the occasion. Many a time our trip might have expired from misadventure if it had n't been for this sense of humor which welled up always a little higher than the peak of the immediate misfortune.

I was busy keeping up with the dim knapsack ahead of me, for when Brutus is agitated his

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stride lengthens. At length he collided with an invisible beech. But his only remark was, "I 'd like to get my hands on the cheerful liar who said we could n't miss our way."

"He lied better than he knew," I said, "for there 's a light."

We stumbled excitedly along. But the light went out. In a minute we found ourselves in the ashen gloom of that sugar-grove of twenty minutes back, with the same boy still in his identical trousers. He was coolly gathering up his tools. The light had been transferred to a cigarette.

"Hello," he said, "so it 's you fellers again. Get lost?"

"No. Been huntin' mushrooms," muttered Brute. "Got a lantern?"

The boy, enveloped in cigarette smoke and darkness, said nothing.

"He does n't really mean a lantern for mushrooms," I hastened to explain, "but we could n't find the thicket and we'll return it to-morrow."

The boy had n't any lantern. But he offered to put us beyond the thicket, and for a little money I secured his services for the through trip to Twilight. He led off saying, "It is a bit shady, but you can't miss it."

"Is n't he a cheerful liar?" whispered Brute at my heels.

A bit shady no more described the first hemlock

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grove we got into than Egypt in the plague. It was as black as a 'phone booth in a cellar. Out we would crawl into one semi-clearing, only to replunge into another pocket of darkness. Our guide struck a match now and then.

After passing through a few sets of brambles, any one of which was adequate to deserve the name of thicket, I began to admire the sureness with which the boy led us on. But when we began to wander in a general sort of brambledom, I began to doubt.

"How many thickets are there on this trip?" Brute asked.

"Only the one," replied the guide with a shade less confidence.

"Well, we have n't missed that then." Brute was evidently thinking my thoughts. The psychology of the moment was being shared by all three alike. For as we were about to penetrate the barrier for the third time in the manner of that son of Mother Goose who scratched out both his eyes, we halted simultaneously and without a word spoken.

"The Park ought to be sort of over there," and our guide waved vaguely into the darkness, which was now unfeatured and complete.

"I think it 's kind of over there," suggested Brute with a magnificent gesture.

"I dunno but what it is," said the poor kid.

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We spread out our map on the snow and I held the match.

"You don't guess we 're on High Peak?" continued the irrepressible; "it looks as if it might be awful brambly there."

"Oh, no, not on High Peak," the youngster replied solemnly. The match burned out. The darkness swooped upon us, three solemn asses grouped on all fours about the paper showing dully on the snow. I struck another on a board beside me. It was a finger-post, saying, "To Clum Hill."

"Sure, that 's the trail going backwards," exclaimed the Cheerful One. "I knew we could n't miss."

"Of course not," interrupted Brute; "nobody could miss a trail that wanders around like this 'un. But what I want to know is which side of that briar-patch we 're on now."

The remainder of the crossing was performed with minor acrobatics, but performed. We trod a road once more with an exhalation of repose. When we had arrived at the entrance of the Park, we blessed our guide and sent him back. But not before Brute had made him say that one *could* miss the way.

"It will purify his soul," said my companion later. Until then I had not heard him refer to that abstraction. It interested me.

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CHAPTER VI

NATTY BUMPPO'S VIEW

AND now we had arrived at a very agreeable stage of our pilgrimage. For a few days our goings and comings were to center upon the house of France, which in turn centered upon the kitchen stove. This black but ingratiating quadruped had its quarters in a sunny room from which other rooms also relating to the art of sustenance made way, one to the pantry, one to the cold larder, and one to the scene of dining. This benign monster's capacity for white kindling must have seemed nothing short of devilish to the chopper, but the vapors that it gave off were appositely celestial. Dishes that one in the world had learned to regard as common became in the hands of Madame France comestibles for the gods. And she became the bright star of our comparisons when we were again waited upon by the lesser housewives of the Catskills. Their most verdant efforts withered in the consèquence.

There is a zone still geographically extant where food can be obtained, which, in style of serving and genuineness of substance, dates back to the pas-

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toral era midway between the culinary dark ages of back-woods dyspepsia and the present period of automatic lunches and delicatessen dinners. This zone begins where a meal is the substance and not the shadow, as a *déjeuner* or a tea. It reaches its richest development in that backward region where milk is still derived from a cow, butter from a churn, and maple syrup from the maple tree. It can be recognized as such when the fresh but simple viands of the poor are all put on the table at once. Unlike the caloric froth of an apartment breakfast, which can be wafted down the esophagus while the morning news is being digested, the breakfast of the gastronomic zone that I am describing demands one's full powers. I defy anybody to mix printer's ink with real country cream and wild strawberries.

The Catskills, particularly the dairying part of the Catskills, belongs in this zone of mediæval but blessed nourishment. Time and again we found that the delicate mastery of bread-making, of cream-skimming, of poultry-slaying, of trout-broiling and berry-layer-caking, of venison-steaking and pork-chop-browning, of butter-churning and cheese-making and cider-brewing and apple-tarting—in short, the mastery of fundamental mysteries we found—was so complete that living threatened to be dying as well. I have seen Brute drive such a salient into a gooseberry tart as to

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render the chances of a future attack negligible. And, indeed, his customary division of anything of the sort gave rise to the important conundrum: Why is Mrs. France's house like her pie? The answer is exceedingly trivial and shall not deface a serious page.

However, it was into an establishment such as I have hinted that we two did intrude at the hour of seven, the hour when most good Catskillers are thinking of bed. But the friendly people bestirred themselves for our comfort, and in short order Brute was discussing his favorite tobacco with the woodsman, while his wife was having us in dry socks. We amused them, it appeared, with an account of our journey from Clum Hill, and soon after had wished ourselves upstairs. He rests doubly well who lays a contented mind upon a smooth pillow. That night beneath the eiderdown brusque April was forgotten. A gentle ozone from the hemlock slopes breathed over us the balm of its tranquillity.

We awoke to a world brilliant and fairly ringing with light. The cloud scroll had rolled up and liberated a sun long chafing to be free. Woods and valleys lay bright in the universal luster. Sunshine and snowshine and the white of birch-bark groves shimmered like a broad fountain of light, till the sedate firs were ready to dance too. Only if one climbed down in a ravine did he see

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that the hemlocks retained some vestige of their gravity and that the sky was still true blue.

It is because winter is so often dark that its name has a sinister sound. When we say that winter is coming we mean that we are going to have to rise in the dark, to have to witness the end of the day while we are far from home. The cold is not the objection. Sparkles from rows of varied icicles, tree limbs lit with their shell of ice, all the ecstasy of resplendent carnival, buoys our spirits above the most distressing zeros. December would outliven May, given an equal brilliance. And so on that morning we were gaily tuned to any comedy, had Puck been there to present the way.

Haines' Falls village is quadruply gifted. It stands at the head of the Kaaterskill Clove, at the brink of its own falls, opposite the Kaaterskill Falls, and is but sixty minutes' walk from the edge of the old sea-cliff that overlooks the valley of the Hudson. The view from this cliff while not so inclusive as that from the Overlook, is rather more impressive if taken from the Mountain House. It is the view that Cooper commemorated, that Queen Victoria longed to see. (She said she did.) It is the view that made the Catskills famous. And knowing this, with the impetuosity of the best sight-seers we hastened along the road to the Mountain House, in hopes of looking

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off into the neighboring States before the atmosphere should become clouded with the lees of later hours—though, to be downright honest, the ravings of previous describers had somewhat taken off the edge of my expectation.

If you will exhume the diaries, monographs, travelogs, and exhalations concerning the tremendous brink that we were approaching, you will shudder at it. All the diarists did. Every visitor who had had paper handy set his pen to distilling adjectives about it. On the map the elevation is set down at 2250 feet. But the visitors re-arranged that. They described the terrifying gulf below them. They depicted thunder-storms raving incontinently, miles beneath. If they were artists they drew tolerable pictures of the sky into which they were thrust. They usually situated it about four feet above their heads. If literary, they likened the Hudson to a thread of silver creeping like a tape-measure to the visible Atlantic. At least, Miss Martineau says she saw the Atlantic. And all the other unfortunates who could neither draw nor write reported what they thought, hurling towering adjectives from the cliff until one would think that the awful abyss (their favorite term) would have got choked with them.

Being fairly well read up on this mass of memoranda, I was also fairly ready to be disappointed in the sight. I knew there must be some

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sort of capacious hole in front of the hotel, but I had discounted the layers of thunder-storms plying between one's feet and the farms below. And yet—

We had got Mrs. France to put us up a lunch, not wishing to be dinner-bound, thinking that after we had got through with the view we could go somewhere and enjoy the day. The road had brought us to the shining levels of the two small lakes, and then to the head of the Otis Elevating Railway, which disposes of any of the old romance of getting to the summit. We walked along the board-walk in front of the pioneer hotel, stepped out on the overhanging rock, and looked. I could feel Brute looking as I was looking—deeply, thirstily. All the incontinent ravings were forgotten, blown away by the outburst of the view. And later, when we had sat down, the first thing I said, quite seriously, was:

"I wonder why nobody ever told me about this, Brute."

"Where was they to begin?" he very adequately replied.

It is a curious thing that geologically, historically, and emotionally our East represents age and our West youth. Geologically the Hudson Valley was an antique before the Colorado Cañon had made a mark for itself. Historically New York State helped in the national councils a couple

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Photograph by C. O. Bickelmann

NATTY BUMPPO'S VIEW

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Photograph by J. B. Allison

HAINES' FALLS

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of centuries before anyone even thought of Arizona Territory. Only yesterday did flannel shirts cease to be full dress in a land that could not be shocked.

And the parallel holds between the two Grand Cañons: for, since that first view, I shall always think of the great broad valley lying between the Berkshire ramparts and the Catskill cliff as the Grand Cañon of the East. It fits the East so exactly. Instead of the Colorado gulf of splintered slopes, the abyss of painted splendors, you have a serene picture complete in three lines, subdued in tones of green and blue. The Colorado cañon exalts with its divine rhapsody; the Hudson Valley breathes celestial repose. Out West is violence of desire; here there is quiet of attainment.

As we stood gazing over the river of civilization, with its valley green with farms and touched here and there with spires, I seemed to feel the presence of the unseen city at the end of the river, as well as companionship for the farmer in the field beneath. At my back rose the impressive forest. There were majestic distances, but the momentous quality of the scene was the quiet and settled beauty of the level land between the two wide walls. How striking when compared to that Western seven-hued fantasy of isolation fresh from the hand of God. Those of us who have been bred to this may

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visit that gorgeous and incredible wild, may sigh a while for the reckless freedom of those Western spaces. But we will return to the mellowed richness of our East, the savor of which can be got nowhere better than from that Catskill cliff.

Sooner or later young blood gets to the stone-shying period of view-taking. There is no prospect under heaven so grand and so dignified that youth will not come to throwing rocks into it. Youth gives sentiment its due, but nothing to sentimentality; and so, at about the time that old ladies would have begun to repeat how much they were being moved by the panorama, from our parapet Brute set to work trying to hit some of those farms below us with red shale. He had finished with creation couchant on a field of green, and thought it was time for a little something rampant. I could not have stood a companion puling and mouthing at every turn of the landscape, so gladly I set out with him along the ledge that leads south from the hotel.

This ledge brought us to a projection from which one's eye shot across the country a hundred miles at a wink. The day was too clear for the best effects. They say that the area of impression one gets from that ledge is all of ten thousand square miles when there is no haze, and if so we had the benefit of every square inch of it. The day was what the farmers call a weather-breeder, but it

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must have been breeding somewhere else. There was n't any weather visible,—no clouds, no hazes. The hills were stripped of atmosphere almost to nakedness. If other people have seen Mt. Washington from that promontory, so did we, though I should hate to take an examination on its shape. An artist would have daubed his canvas with yellows and purples, I suppose; but for our duller eyes there seemed but endless white, variable green, and an infinite supply of blue. So still, so clear the air that the steam from a train ten miles away on the other side of the Hudson not only displayed to us its lights and shadow, but we could see the reflection of its whiteness in the river. That is a statement of fact and not mere traveler's license.

Through stunted spruces and small hemlocks we came to a path that took us up to the Kaaterskill House, a mammoth hotel set near the summit of this mountain. It was hawsered to the rocks as was the Overlook, and presented a broad invitation to the heavy gusts that have hurled themselves as yet in vain upon its white bulk. There were ladders to the roof, and we climbed. Though we had come but five minutes' walk from the edge of the precipice, the quality of the view had been completely changed. No longer did one get the unique sensation of looking down from the battlement of some stupendous castle. One saw only

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the slope of evergreen leading to the unseen brink, and then far off a blue gulf. It was very fine still, but the difference was the same as that between talent and genius. The suddenness was lost, and with it went the thrill.

But from this roof I had another and almost equally memorable sensation. It was on another morning, when the west wind was flowing strongly from a deep sky filled with great galleon-clouds that sailed in white fleets with hulls of distant gray. The sky was all in motion. The wind, though strong, was steady; and, looking down upon the green-crested ranges rolling out of the west, I had the distinct feeling that each ridge of mountain was a hurrying comber, curled, and about to break. Even the nearest shapes helped with the illusion. High Peak and Round Top, viewed from that hotel, seemed like sublime breakers just ready to topple over in a universal thunder of white foam. The distant Overlook looked as I have often seen breakers look from the seaward, hastening toward the plunge. I could feel the rush, feel the exhilaration. And, to complete the illusion of this tremendous ocean, the white plain stretched below like the wide surf of the spent wave, flinging itself upon the Berkshire beach. But the green waves never fell; the great combers, advancing as if from some vast inland Pacific, got no nearer. The clouds sailed and the wind blew

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fresh on my cheek, but the tumult was petrified in its gigantic play. And there you may see it at any time that the sky is blue and the small spiral-fibered cedars bend to the east.

For Brute and me the calm of our noon sun was utterly satisfactory. Lunch-time struck beneath the belt, and down we sat on the porch of this winter skeleton of summer fatness. How unreal the hotel seemed! Ten months of lonely cold and two of vivacious summer might breed some introspection in a house, as well as its own desert does in the Sphinx. But I was glad there were no people humming about. "Any place," I wrote later in my note-book, "is as good as new if you only are there out of season." A few days after I wrote: "People don't mind sharing an orchestral concert with the audience. Why should they prefer not to have a crowd with them before some impressive panorama?" There 's a note-book for you!

The great advantage of visiting inspiring scenery or talking with strong men is not what you get out of them, but what they draw out of you—the same thing, of course, but put in a more comforting light. If you are keenly alive all men will interest and no scene will bore. There is no commonplace of scenery. The dreariest desert flows with color, and the drought-driest pasture, silken with spider-webs at certain lights or musical with small life, can be a wonderland of delight. But

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it does pay to hunt up the great. For, when the marvel is at last come upon, when you at last are struck to the very core of your being by the Bridal Veil Falls, by the Rapids of Niagara, or even by the October glories on this Wall of Manitou, your spirit overflows with an intenser life. You swim, for a moment at least, in the greatness about you, just as one who had talked with Lincoln would have to be more generous or more kind. The nobler the sight the nobler you are, for the time being. And this is the supreme worth of travel.

The effects of such a valuable shock wear off. I have found people altogether despicable in an environment that should have produced saints. But, even if a man can't be known by the country that he keeps as well as by the company, he will know himself better if he submits himself to the play of Mother Nature upon his personality. On the curvature of our green globe there is a spot for every one more satisfying than any other, and if you will show me the spot I can to some degree tell you the man. Some tend to upland pastures, some to the deep woods, some take a suburban grass-plot, and some a room in the city. The only being I can't conceive of is he who wants to perch on the side of the Grand Cañon all his days. Even Dante was not big enough for that. All should travel some, if only as far as a man can walk in fifteen hours of a Sunday. Nothing will help to revise

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one's table of contents like a day a-foot. As we sat there in the flood of sunshine, devouring the lunch of the excellent Mrs. France (may she get a white stroke for every one she puts up) and indulging in intermittent discourse, some things that Brute said made me quite sure that the above is true.

If you could have seen that boy sprawling over three or four porch steps, half blinking in the light like a contented woodchuck, looking lazily out over the valley and letting his old black pipe draw his thoughts from him, you 'd never guess that they were thoughts. Neither would Brute have claimed that reputation for them. He did not crave that position. But those steady dark eyes of his had been set broad to see things true. Just because his good nature belied his ability to criticize, one got the impression that he was n't as much interested in things as was the case. But I found that he had the habit of clinging to a string of ideas until he reached the ends. Then he tied a knot. He was evidently reaching for one of the ends when he said abruptly:

"It 's funny how they lie."

"Who?"

"Oh! all the people who preach at you and teachers and copy-books. I was thinkin' of the copy-books and the way they made me write out 'Business before pleasure' fifty times at a throw.

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When I 'd get to the pleasure end of it there was n't any. I can't see as there 's much business connected with this goose-chase of ours, and yet I can't somehow feel as if I was losin' out."

He smiled comfortably and then continued: "I 've got a stack of ideas, more 'n I could use in a year at the garage. When I get home I 'll show 'em a surprise. But I 'm going to find that copy-book writer first."

"He was n't so far wrong," I remarked. Brute transferred his gaze from the valley to me.

"Then what in the devil are we doing sitting around in these mountains? We 've been putting pleasure so far ahead of business that it is n't in the same day. We keep it up and keep it up; and yet I can't see as your conscience is giving you much anguish."

A laugh escaped me at his picture.

"You 've mixed the meanings. The old-fashioned way was to hate your job, but let it take it out of you for ten or twelve hours a day and then heat up the scraps and call them pleasure. Nowadays the law cuts it down to eight hours of drudgery and sixteen of something else. But there are a lot of people like you and me who must have our pleasure first and all the time. And we get paid for it, too."

"How do you suggest cashing in to-day's fun?" he asked with a little laugh.

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"You just suggested it yourself." I had to laugh, too, at his look of mystification.

"Then I must be getting to be a mighty loose talker."

"Ideas, man. You never get any ideas when you 're not enjoying yourself—at least, any valuable ideas. It was n't all work that made Jack a dull boy—it was all drudgery did it. And I refuse to put drudgery before pleasure, and just now so did you. You said you were going to wake up your garage with your ideas. Just like Ford, maybe. You can't tell me that he stopped having pleasure when the whistle blew; now did he?"

"Not punctual," Brute admitted.

"He put pleasure first. Pleasure paid him. Pleasure always pays, if it is real."

"What 's to tell," asked the boy, "whether you 're experiencin' a real pleasure or just being a slant-domed fan of gaiety?"

That was a hard drive at my theory. We were both silent for a moment in the cascade of white light that poured upon the brooding forest. A short way off, some pines stood shining like candelabra. There seemed no reason why the path of the future should not be plain, so abundant was the joy of living. Brute answered his own question:

"I think I get you; it 's this way. In your way of living there won't need to be anybody to do the

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chores, for there won't be any chores to do. There 'll be enough people to have everybody doing what he likes and yet get everything done."

"And better done than now," I added; "for it will be done from the heart. That 's the only real fun—doing something from the heart. Call it business, if you like to fool the world. Or call it just plain pleasure, if you 're bold. You like your grease and monkey-wrenches, and I like something else; but both of them would be abominable trades for a third man. And if coming out here in the wilds did n't do another thing for us but make us certain, it would be time well spent. But you found your ideas in addition."

"And the money-end 'll come? Do you believe that this pleasure-business will bring in the money as sure as that old system of drudgery?"

"Ford made his millions out of being happy. If he 'd stuck to business he 'd 've still been working for a living."

"But Ford 's Ford."

"Well, you 're you, with just the same truths holding water as they did for Ford and all the rest of us in this good old United States that God and Thomas Jefferson planned out so well. Did they make you learn the Declaration of Independence in your school?"

"That dope about life, liberty, and the pursuit

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of happiness?" Brute lit his pipe again. "It never impressed us kids much."

"That very dope is the whole thing. That 's the American contribution to this universe. Our American notion of pleasure is to follow out our bent, and our notion of happiness is having the liberty to follow out our pleasure."

"Well, there ain't so much happiness lying around, according to that," said Brute.

"That 's true. Because there are mighty few who 've read their Declaration of Independence right. There are a million clerks keeping ledgers who secretly want to keep cows, a million milliners dreaming how happy they are *going* to be when they 've chewed off the last thread, five million unhappy school-teachers who don't know what that first sentence of the Declaration means."

"Which is—?"

"Healthy life, intelligent liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—meaning happiness in your pursuit."

I knew that Brute's first puff was the end of the conversation, but his thoughts were burrowing deep still, and in that vast silence any talk seemed but trivial embroidery to the largeness of the day. The mountain seemed brooding over the plain, and the plain led one's fancy to the sea. But now their impersonal hugeness seemed less interesting

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far than the glimpse I had had into the boy's heart beside me. And, as if in answer to my mood, he stretched and said:

"Seein' big must make you think big. I wonder what we 'd have talked at if we 'd been sittin' on the Rockies."

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CHAPTER VII

WHEN IS A WATERFALL?

NOT when it is turned off, surely. Yet what is one to term the location of the fall that is off falling? Not a waterfall still; that is misleading. Not the where-it-ought-to-be-running-over-place-if-it-were-running; that is a little inconvenient for a sign-board. And yet, just see the predicament into which the paucity of our vocabulary may throw a man who adheres to the truth. For instance, a summer visitor at the Laurel House—the hotel that is perched alongside the great Kaaterskill Falls—may very easily plunge a truthful attendant into a dilemma of this sort, simply because there is no word at hand to describe an abrogated cataract. She may request to be shown the falls. What is he to do?

If he replies that there are n't any, he is exposed to the indignation of a woman who considers that she is being trifled with. If, on the other hand, he leads her to the vacancy where the water should be falling but is n't, he is again exposed to her indignation, this time because she considers that she has been trifled with. And yet, if, on the third

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hand (and this shows how preposterous the situation is), he should tell her the truth—that it is n't time for the waterfall yet—she would complain to the management of his impertinence.

To avert injustice being done either the waterfalls or the management, one has only to regard the Catskill peculiarities of supply and command. The heavens supply, the proprietors command, and between the two the visitors are not deprived of their spectacle as they otherwise would be. For the Catskills receive a great deal of water, but let it all run off. There are only a few ponds, only small areas left of deep pine soil. From November until March a cover of snow hoards up almost all the precipitation. In midspring this is released with a gush. The country becomes one vast waterworks. Every inequality in the land is a gulley running with snow-drip. The brooks are noisy, the large streams leave their banks and wander about the lowlands. The highlands pour huge streams from every projection. Whatever is n't a cataract is a cascade in April; but by May the pace has become normal, by June the smaller rills are dry, by July the larger brooks are shrunk, and if August be dry one would have to carry water to the chief waterfalls to make them go.

Now, carrying water to waterfalls may be a shade less absurd than carting coals to Newcastle, but it is an expensive mode of entertaining summer

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guests. Yet many of these guests have come to the hotels in response to the lavish advertisement of the beauty of the waterfalls. Hence the hotel proprietors are face to face with a trying situation: How to live without waterfalls but not without guests. They meet the situation triumphantly by turning off the one and keeping the other. They save up the waterfalls by doing without them at night and at other times when they are not of much use, and are thus able to provide a life-size cataract at certain hours when somebody happens along who can afford one.

Consequently, everybody who can't visit the Catskills when Nature is running naturally can get almost the same effect when she is run by hand. Even in an average summer there is a surprising amount of water still foot-free in the wooded valleys, and every few years one of those wet seasons arrives when Neptune himself would be quite proud of the results.

On that day when Brute and I turned by luck to come back by the brink of the Kaaterskill Clove, the only flood in our thoughts was the flood of sunshine, and the only fall was the one we were trying not to take down to the bottom of the ravine. We went in a southeasterly direction, at first, from the hotel to a bare place called the Palenville Overlook, which showed the ravine to splendid advantage. Then, picking our way along the slipperinesses, we

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reached Sunset Rock, a magnificent sort of promontory-place to which we shifted our allegiance from all previous outlooks. Opposite, the great side of the Clove rose in our faces. Shadows fell in heavy blocks along the ravine, and white cascades fell with inverted spires in three places down the confronting wall.

Here the spell of winter was laid upon us. A chickadee in some distant dell reminded us of life; everything else was radiant marble or dreaming wood. Afternoon in the shadow of Round Top was well advanced, and the air had begun to drift down the Clove with its weight. But there was no wind. The stillness of the whole day and the radiance of it will always be in my memory, an actual presence. Only a few times in a life would there likely be anything so stable, so impressive, as that day-span of shining quiet; and it was just my luck that I had been able to spend it in such a memorable place with a genuine, fine spirit to enjoy it with.

At last the cold began to search us, and, trying to fix the crystal panorama in our memories, we moved on. Bright finger-tips of cloud rising in the west were beginning to foretell the morrow. The witch that weaves the storm-cloud for the Catskills had been all that day preparing, and these were the first shadows of the veiled spirits who were to do her bidding.

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CREST OF THE KAATERSKILL

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KAATERSKILL FALLS

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The swiftly changing skies of mountain-lands and their effects upon the distances are the most beautiful of all the highland scenes. In the Catskills particularly is this so. The Kaaterskill Clove is the largest causeway out of the great citadel. Its sides are flung wide enough to stage the parade of storms, and in many seasons it is more impressive than far deeper gorges, simply because of the exceeding richness of the Catskill skies. The Rockies swim at the bottom of a sea of incredible clearness; the Cuban Mountains wrap themselves in sultry vapors of rare tints; but the Catskills, the Adirondacks, and the White Mountains are situated in a current of the atmosphere, continental in its sweep, hastening as it nears them, which provides an ever-changing pageant of light and shadow, storm and shine. One day will fairly pierce all distance with its brightness, and the next soften the ranges into an intimate neighborliness. The empty blue of a summer's morning will tower with thunder-castles by noon, and by evening all will be fair once more, the farther valleys rich with a thousand shades worn by the humidity. In midwinter, in early spring, in noonlight, in moonlight, and at dawn, there is always some combination of light and shade and forest beauty to make one pause.

From the Sunset Rock it is not far to the Falls of the Kaaterskill. Stealing to the edge, which

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was an extremely unobstructed slide of ice, we looked down. Despite the continued cold, there was a fair volume of water falling into its vase of ice. This vase was over a hundred feet high, irregular at the top, and shaded from clear white into yellows and deep blues. And always the water poured into the vase as into a drinking-horn that would never be filled.

A stairway climbs down into the wide bowl that the fall has carved in the reluctant rock, and down it we slid at our peril. Snow-dust, ice, frost blown from the cup's white rim, whole palisades of ice, were only too eager to abet our descent. The going down to Avernus was as nothing for ease. And the temptation was to take one's eye from the footing, to gaze into that fascinating twilight vision of descending white. At the bottom we safely looked and looked until the amphitheater of giant icicles had faded from blue to gray-green and into the colorless filmy gray of night. Then we felt at liberty to go, frozen, hungry.

The head of the Kaaterskill Clove is crowned with falls. There are half a dozen major ones and a score of minor. The Haines' Falls achieves a descent of 240 feet in two leaps, and as much more in a few succeeding. They are beautiful from the foot of the gorge, and impressive in spring or after a heavy rain in summer. Like the Kaaterskill, they are carried on in summer on the instalment

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plan, being dammed until a spectacle has accumulated, the theory being that half a fall is no better than none. Brute and I were very lucky. We saw them after a winter of continued cold, when the accumulation of ice was exceptional. Again we saw them after a heavy snow had softened the portcullis of icicles and draped the sharp edges of the rock with curving lines of bewildering beauty. And once more I saw them in a season of much rain, when the roar and spray at the bottom grew into a contending mêlée of naked forces. The heavy foot of the descending torrent thrust on one the horror of mere brutal insistence.

In the vicinity of Haines' Falls there is a waterfall for every person, one for every mood. The Bastion, the Buttermilk, the La Belle, are some for those who like their waterfalls to begin with B. You can follow up any brook only a little way, and you are certain to come upon mossy grottos, cool, damp, and very lonely, where you can have a waterfall to yourself. Or you can linger around the more famous sights and collect the exclamations of the tourist arrivals. If you wish for loveliness, visit these places in early May. The bushes will be in their new greens, the trees beginning to bud, the first flowers whitening the woods that are themselves so delicately dappled with the fresh foliage. And as you come upon one exuberant cascade after another you will wonder how old

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Earth, replete with merriment, could affect you drearily again. It is worth while going long distances to fill one's memory with scenes to aid one in harsh seasons.

The reverse of the spring gladness has its charm, as well. It comes at that pause of the season after the summer heat and before the autumn rains. Then steal up to the Kaaterskill and sit at the foot of the thread of water that falls into the quiet bowl. The shrunken stream only whispers now, but in the stillness you can think back to the time when you heard it roaring. It seems now more likable, if less splendid. And the woods are thinking it all over. Leaves fall one by one, and here and there shafts of light shine down where the woods were lately dark. A maple gleams among the beeches, which are growing yellow, and the hemlocks are full of the sense of coming winter. If you sit quite still you may see a thrush drink from the pool or hear the chirp of some passing bird. But never a song now. Winter is on the way. A red squirrel is busy on the upper bank, and the bell of the distant train tells you that there were once people here. Otherwise you have only the Falls and the weight of endless time.

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CHAPTER VIII

THAT ELUSIVE VAN WINKLE

THE Kaaterskill Falls has not existed a great while. The region from which the stream flows was recently the favorite resting-place of Manitou. And, since he did not like to be disturbed while resting, he advised the Indians when hunting not to intrude upon his holier ground.

Once, however, a reckless brave followed his quarry into Manitou's preserve. Having penetrated, he looked around. He came upon some gourds hung up in a tree, and stole one. Then he fled. In his flight he stumbled, letting fall the gourd. Immediately a torrent sprang from the spot, and bore off the brave with it. When it took the great leap at the present Falls, the Indian was slain and his body was carried down into the Hudson. Since then the stream has kept on flowing.

The moral to be drawn from this occurrence is that the geology book must not be trusted too implicitly. There are a goodly number of such events that have transpired in the Catskills. The

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wall itself from which these mountains get their fame was erected by Manitou to protect the valley country from the evil spirits living toward the west. The weather witch and the extreme activity of the other spirits who dwelt in this vicinity have left their stamp (and considerable gossip) on this country. It is to these essential beginnings that we should turn when we want to learn something. The soil of folk-lore in America is very thin.

In his faithful narrative about one good man Washington Irving has helped to make the Catskills equal to their opportunity. With every apology to Manitou, I must confess that the Catskills are famous rather on account of Irving. It is to Irving and not to the Great Spirit that the Catskill innkeepers should give thanks for their bank-accounts. Yet the late Rip van Winkle, the vanished Union Hotel, the lost race of Doolittles, even the fabled existence of one Washington Irving—what tribute do these progenitors of Catskill fortunes receive? This was the query in the back of my mind that morning as I came down to breakfast. I resolved to search, to see if the chief legend of this part of America had any reputation in its own habitat.

The hot-cake summons had wakened us to find a snow-storm at our windows. Our crystal yesterday had been a brilliant interlude between the

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cycles of sterner stuff of which so much Catskill weather is made.

"It is n't so monstrous springlike," remarked Brute, looking at the thermometer, which registered twelve.

"I 've seen it a heap worse," Mrs. France admitted. "In father's day there 's been four feet of snow on the level in April. And the wind comes down these north cloves like out a bellows."

"Yes, yes," chimed in the old man, for we were now safely embarked upon his dearest topic. "And once, on the 13th of December, we had three feet of snow plumb on the level. But it 'most went by Christmas. I calcalate this is goin' to last."

For the entire period of breakfast—a considerable interval—we enjoyed meteorological reminiscence. Even the ordinary native's memory is stout when it comes to such important matter as the drought of ten years gone this May, or the early frost of nineteen years this coming August. And our entertainer had no ordinary memory. There was n't a thunder-shower, a drop in temperature, a heavy dew in the past, but now moved the old man to awe and anecdote. I had made the strategic mistake at the outset of being interested. When I was sufficiently up in hot waves and had had my fill of freshets, I was too well committed

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as listener. When we had reviewed the floods we came to the whirlwinds.

There was the thrilling story of Nicholas Rau's barn carried over a cliff or a county—I can't remember which—by a tornado. It had come from Sullivan County—the tornado, not the barn—and passed on by way of the Mountain House, its black trunk striking the ground, the sky a robin's-egg blue and the air full of bits of leaves as if they had been put through a coffee-grinder—"and a woman praying that she be saved was struck by that there swaying trunk and killed." Well, the tornado passed off to make room for a blizzard, and when we had finished up that and the Indian summers, ground-hog days, and remaining excesses of the local climate, I was able to engineer the conversation to the topic of my desired investigation.

"Vreeland," I suggested, "will you stroll down with me to Rip van Winkle's village? You ought to do a mile for every twelve cakes."

"Rip van Winkle," he repeated in a fog-bound sort of way. "Rip van Winkle's village? Funny name. Do you know him?" Can you imagine a Fiji-Islander trying to orientate himself when you mention New York? Brute's head was bothered in the same way.

"My dear galoot!" I exclaimed, amazed. "Have you never read it?"

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"Oh! If it 's a story, maybe I have. There 's a lot of things a fellow does he don't care to remember. What 's hurtin' you so?"

"Every summer half a million people visit these hills partly on account of that story. It gives them a distinction other hills don't have. And I don't doubt that twenty million school children talk of Irving each winter."

"That 's nothing," broke in Brute, quite on base again. "Forty million children talk about Ty Cobb summer *and* winter, yet I don't believe that you know whether he 's a pitcher or a catcher. But you might tell me the Rip tale."

"Some day," I said severely, "the American public may welcome its great pitchers and greater writers with an equal interest. As for the tale, I 'll have to read it to you. It 's all in the way that Irving tells it. Mrs. France 'll lend us her copy."

But Mrs. France did n't have a copy, although she had heard of the legend. It was n't the day for the library to be open, which suited me exactly, for it gave me an excuse for discovering van Winkle's status in his native village of Palenville. Accordingly we set out—much to the surprise of the weather historian, who had thought up a couple of good hail-storms to tell us—and in half an hour were descending the deep and narrow glen of the Kaaterskill Clove into which we

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had looked the day before from Sunset Rock.

To-day there was no looking up. Evenly, steadily the small flakes fell. Evidently this was to be no affair of flurry, sun, and flurry. The last words we had heard from the weather gentleman were: "I calcalate you boys had better be careful. It looks to me just like it looked before that big storm January twenty year—" But Palenville was only four miles from Twilight Park, and we had all the day for plodding through the worst that might happen.

The north slopes of the High Peak ranges that make the south wall of the Clove are devoted to cottage colonies grouped about their nuclear hotels—Sunset Park Inn, Twilight Park Inn, and Squirrel Inn. From these parks there are to be enjoyed views of the remote plain, sometimes cameo-clear through the nearer frame of mountain-shoulder, sometimes swimming in a half-tropical blueness beyond the forest-green. Between the ranges runs the road, and from it, looking back, you get a very comical picture in clear weather of the inns with their satellite cottages clutching to the hillside. Their steep roofs and projecting porches convey the idea of huddled panic. One almost expects to hear them shriek in their obvious fear of sliding to the bottom.

That snowy day, however, the picture was softened. Empty and nearly veiled, they resembled

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a flock of birds asleep. The bottom of the Clove looked too far away to be afraid of.

On our side of the ravine gravity had been active. A part of the road had slipped away to a less dizzy level. I found that nearly every winter some part said farewell, and that every spring it was rather the custom than otherwise to remake some portion of the highway to take the place of the departed. The gulf it slips into is about six hundred feet deep. It will require a good many roads to fill it up. Occasionally a boulder from higher up the mountain cavorts to the bottom. And at any time in the spring one may have a rock as big as an elephant-cage bound lightly across the road on the way down. For mountains put together so loosely, it is a wonder that they last so long. And still more wonderful that the State can maintain roads of such excellence in a country perpetually besieged by flood and frost. But the lessons of the Appian Way have been well learned by the contractors; the ancient Romans might well point with pride to the triumphs of their pupils. It restores faith in contractors to see a Watling Street promenading across a wilderness. Even through the Adirondack wilds, where the contractor might have escaped with an inferior product, he has laid a foundation for lasting praise. State work means perfect work—in the Department of Highways of New York.

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About half way down we came to the ravine leading in from the left which invited us to view the Kaaterskill Falls in ermine. But we kept on the wide and winding way, crossed the bridge, and yielded to the temptations on neither hand. It cannot be so easily done in spring, when the call of falling waters commands you to at least one look. Even on a melting day in winter the atmosphere of this descent is thick with waterfalls. One is at a loss to imagine how all the water gets to the top, for it rains only four or five days in the week—in spring.

The explanation probably is in the blotting-pad forest. The leaf-mold, the mosses, the ferns, the trees, themselves living reservoirs, the blanket of snow—all these influences stay the flood in spring and moisten the lips of August drought. The Catskills woods have had a narrow squeak. If the State had not acquired its territory when it did, the misfortune of a denuded forest would have become a stark reality instead of a peril that is passing. On account of the eternal possibility of fire that peril is never wholly past, and the man who visits this region either in spring wetness or in summer dryness realizes that this charming mountainland would be only a mudhole or a desert if left to the mercy of the alternate seasons. Even to-day whole private mountainsides are being unscientifically slashed. It is unfortunate that in

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this case the crimes of the fathers are visited upon the visitors. Let us hope that brimstone makes a hotter fire than brush.

However callous one may grow to waterfalls in this region, there is a charming glen just after you pass Wild Cat Ravine, called Hillyer's, which houses a fall called the Fawn's Leap. The story is harrowing. A hunted deer came with her fawn to the opposite bank of the deep pool. There was no escape. The doe made the leap successfully, but was compelled to witness in anguish her offspring spring off, only to land, alas! in the pool, where it swam around, or so the story goes, for a couple of days. The name, without the story, is really fitting for an exquisite waterfall, and a great improvement on Dog's Hole, by which it formerly was known. An appropriate name is half the pleasure in a bit of scenery, and the motive legend, in an Irving's hand, may at any moment frame it in immortal prose. It is not the height of mountains that matters: Olympus is but little higher than these hills.

On that snowy morning we were full of the electric atmosphere. We cared nothing for side-glens. We were our own fawns, having run a good portion of the way down. The snow was not yet an impediment, only an invitation; the flannel-cakes warmed our blood; the grade was steep. One strip of the splendid gorge, however, im-

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pressed us to a walk. On either side the cliffs rose sheer into the snow haze. Even in summer this half mile just above Palenville is not made entirely gentle by the sun. You see Coliseum terraces, stark ledges, tree-clad gulfs, and then the first cottages of Palenville—just the touch of humanity needed to offset the aloofness of the Clove.

Palenville, with its attractive white houses, its rushing stream, so near the mountains, so convenient to the plain, is a place to be thoughtfully recommended for its geography, its incitement to art, but not for its devotion to classic literature, at least the American classics. We were now hot upon the trail of Irving, and at the first door, I proposed to give tongue. The first door happened to be a hotel's. It seemed closed, but led us into a bar-room with tables piled with chairs. A busy-looking man poked his head in at our knock, and I said:

"Do you happen to have a Rip van Winkle handy?"

"The bar 's closed," he said quickly, and withdrew. So did we, but slowly, being a bit crumpled with laughter. The hunt was on.

Opposite the hotel was a new house in the Dutch style, tiles, in the chimney and all; but the rest of the place spoke of no great antiquity. The latticed windows and gable fronts, the weathercocks and the antique Inn of the great Tale had

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vanished with the colonists who owned them. I next made my inquiry of a woman.

"Sure!" she exclaimed. "I know what you mean. But it burnt down last year. The ruins is up the next hollow about a mile."

I explained that all I needed was a copy of the book for a few minutes.

"Book—book? I don't know as there 's any book about it. But the Rip van Winkle burnt down last year. The ruins—"

"Yes," admitted the fifth lady we bespoke. "The summer people talk an awful lot about the man, considering he never existed, and if I remember correct that book you mention 's lying about the house somewhere. But I don't know where it 's got to now."

The literary investigation progressed. Nearly everybody had heard of Rip. Joe Jefferson had given the play once in the village. Some had heard of Irving, but nobody could put their hands on the "Sketch Book." One lady got so interested that she sent Helena up to the back closet to look, while I answered her questions:

"Yes, I 'm just borrowing it to read to my friend here. He has never heard the story, which is about your own village. I dare say nobody else here has, either. You can't show me the tree under which Nicholas Vedder, your landlord, used to sit. You can't tell me, likely, where

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Dame van Winkle, who died of scolding a peddler, is buried. Not one of your boarding-houses has named itself the 'Union Hotel.' If Irving should inquire for himself here, he would n't get a word of welcome. He could n't get his check honored, although it is his own hero who brings the tourists through. In the long run it is n't cats nor kills that keep the crowd: it 's poetry. Poets praise and proprietors appropriate. Look at Wordsworth's little lakes; think of the crop of tourists that Longfellow raises on Evangeline's bare meadow. And yet, this degenerate village—"

Well, of course I did n't say all that to the defenseless lady, not even when Helena came back from the closet without the book. But I thought a good deal of it as I turned away in the snow. How often I have inquired abroad for a great man in the vicinity of his greatness, and have had to go farther afield to find him. The exact quantity of honor done a prophet in his own country can be reduced to a formula: the lack of interest increases in intensity the nearer one gets to the center of inspiration. Never inquire for an appreciation of a lighthouse at its base.

Palenville is not unique. Indeed, I am not sure that Irving ever visited the place, and almost certainly there was no real Rip, though van Winkle is a common name. Brute and I found our volume, and our search had so whetted his appetite

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Photograph by J. B. Allison

DOWN THE KAATERSKILL CLOVE

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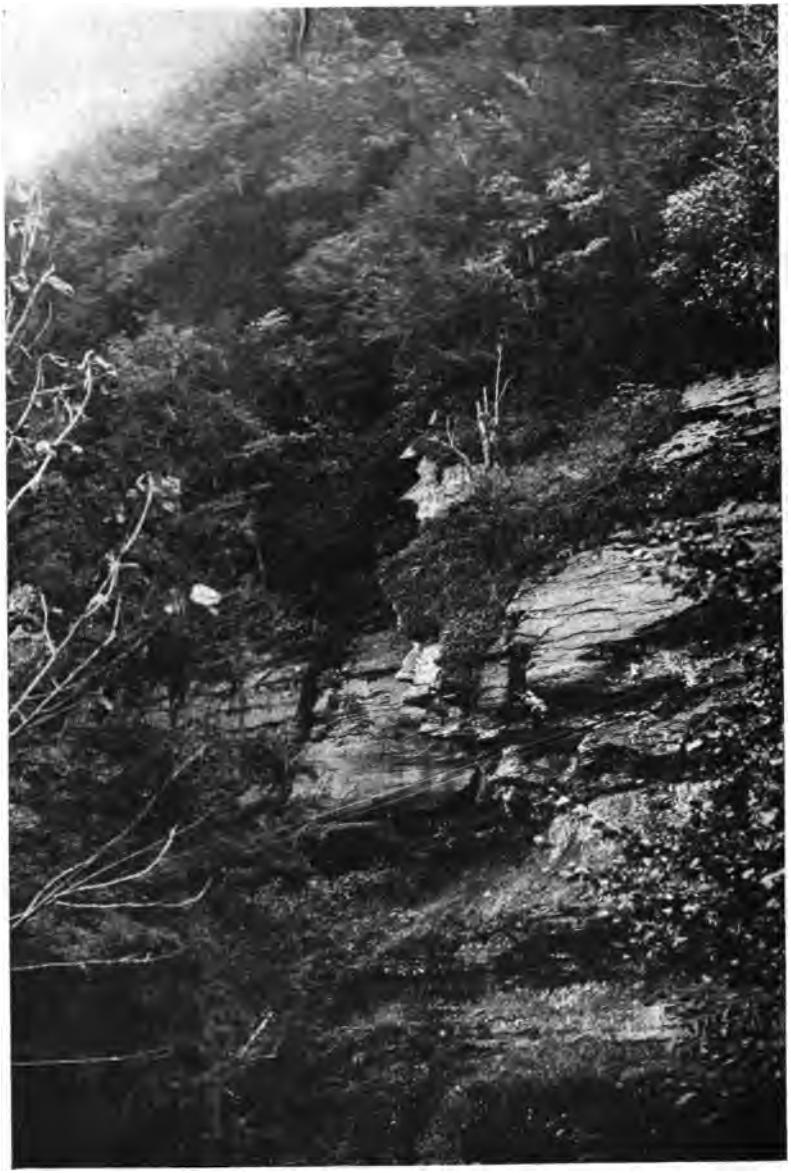

Photograph by C. O. Bickelmann

PROFILE NEAR PALENVILLE

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for the story that his enjoyment of it was very genuine. Indeed, it was he who insisted on roving up into the little clove that (in order to be as confusing as possible) the neighborhood calls Sleepy Hollow. There is the hollowed stone where Rip's bed was, the amphitheater where the game of nine-pins went on, and the little ravine that goes dry in summer, just as Irving described them.

Our visit to Palenville was vastly more productive, however, than any but Chance had in mind. We had just brought our pursuit of Rip to a satisfying close, and were seeking about for a meal to reinforce our climb back to the plateau, when we slid into the agreeable clutches of an old gentleman who might have been Rip himself except for the completeness of his attire. He was quite abrupt and vigorous for age, and after our first question beckoned to us. We followed at a good pace, coming to a long, white-painted house.

"Now," he said, turning jerkily, "I understand what you boys want. You want a little solid food and some mental nourishment; but no liquids, eh?"

"If you have some schnapps, sir," suggested Brute, who had absorbed his Irving.

"My grandfather sold schnapps on this very site, young man. This house used to be the only inn in Palenville. Even as late as 1860 there were

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only two taverns here and eighteen dwellings. I used to work up at the wool factory. And my father worked at the old mill in the Clove. And it was his father who came here soon after Jonathan Palen, for the tannery business. Up the Clove there 's the site yet of the tannery, right near the Profile Rock. Oh, it was a fine country in my day! That was when the artists came, the first ones, in the year before the war. No summer people here then except artists. But this is cold hospitality. Come in, come in."

"Ain't he a rare old bird!" whispered Brute, as the old man bustled around, giving directions as to how to cut the bread and coax the fire. In a few minutes we were seated at his table and our education recommenced.

"You know, the Dutch got on well with the Indians—you knew that, of course—for two reasons: they bought furs from them, and the Indians were a clever lot, not like the Indians you read about, but an organized gang. They lived in houses instead of tents, and had congresses, and their women voted; you knew that, of course. But the Dutch would trade in whisky, and Esopus, down below here, got burnt a couple of times on account of drunken Indians. Sometimes the settlers would have to all go to the big towns while their homes were being burnt. But back they 'd go, when the spell was over. Then came the wars,

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Dutch-English and French-English and American-English. You know that, of course."

This time, I hastened to say that I did.

"Catskill became quite a place. They say Hudson himself stopped there at the mouth of the creek, and when dad drove me down there seventy years ago it was still a place of its own. It had its paper, the 'Catskill Packet,' and its steamboat communication, and through it went all the famous visitors for the Mountain House—you know that, of course. Yes, sir; those were days. Everybody said Charley Beach was crazy to perch that hotel on a edge of a precipice. But it 's still there, ain't it?"

That was a queer but fascinating meal. The Catskill country is full of old men—a testimonial for the climate. Even Robert Juet, who sailed under Hudson, remarked that, and also that they were a "very loving people." We found the old men very sprightly in memory, very keen over their hobbies. Brute and I had listened to a weather enthusiast all breakfast-time, and our lunch was partaken with genealogy. I learned not only about the Indians, the Dutch, the later comers in general, but in detail about John Sax, Fred Layman, Louis Wetzel, famous hunters all. Our host seemed delighted to find a couple of fresh listeners "with good acoustic properties," as Brute summed up the situation. We had no

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chance whatever in the conversation, but we wanted none. Indeed, the flow of history, imperfect perhaps but marvelously well remembered, was astonishing, and left me with a very different impression of Palenville and the region round.

If one will only let his imagination build the past for him while his feet are treading the present, a walking trip in the Catskills becomes a heart-warming affair. You realize the Indian era with its sudden forays from the forest; the era of the first straggling hunters. Then you find coming in quicker succession the tanners, the lumbermen, the brave homesteaders, who people the ravines and lift the paintless and perishing backwoods settlements from the plane of romance to that of business. One has Irving and Cooper and Parkman and a myriad lesser magazinists to turn to. One has also the patriarch still clinging to the remoter post-offices. An inquiry, a word of sympathy, will uncork the past, and you can drink with age in memories of any vintage.

We came out from our nesting with "the rare old bird" to find the April storm trying to outsnow December. There was three ways back: the easy Clove road, the difficult trail straight up the southern bluffs and along the top, and the winding road up Sleepy Hollow. This last we chose.

The original spelling of travel is *travail,* meaning a devilish hard job. We climbed and panted,

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slipped and travailed. Snow is generally regarded as a light substance which an artistic Providence spreads over a winter landscape to make it romantic. But let me assure you that snow is a mineral, and minerals weigh. After an hour I felt like a striking coal-heaver. But Brute, whose idea of the proper way to conduct an exhausting operation is to get it through with, seemed tireless. At length a workman passed us.

"It 's only about two miles," he replied to our question.

A mile is about as poor a measure of distance as any yet invented. The European method of estimating the time you 'll consume is less confusing. There is no such thing as a wilderness mile. It may lie up a mountain or across a swamp. And there was n't any such thing for us, apparently. After an interminable period we met a second workman, and in a thoughtless moment put the same question.

"Oh! About two miles," he said.

"Fine," said Brute; "we have n't lost a yard."

The whole road seemed trained to deception. There is a turn part way up where one comes opposite the Mountain House. On a clear day it looks close enough to smite with David's pebble. Even through the snow it did n't seem so far. Then the road shied off from the ravine, and

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leaped up vast slopes like a wounded gazelle, quite as if it had forgot the Mountain House. Just as I was ready to announce that where we were was as good a place to die in as any, Brute turned around, leaned back against the road we were mounting,—or at least he could have,—and lit his pipe.

"Did you ever hear—?" he began. And, as I had n't, he told me. It was probably the funniest story those virgin woods had ever listened to. Certainly it was a story that might have been imprudent in a nunnery. But Brute's telling brought no blush to the white snow. The humor of it lit up the gray weariness that was falling upon me, as he doubtless intended. When a man is plodding on his brain goes in circles, and during that afternoon whenever that tale came round I laughed, and, laughing, was refreshed. From then on we felt less the pull of the deepening snow, and confidences made for the quickening of comradeship, yet instinctively aware of the fact that there is a certain bloom of delicacy that may never be rubbed off if the finest friendship is to endure.

At twilight we stumbled into the France kitchen, snow-logged but content. The day stood high in my favor, one leg resting on the solid satisfactions of research in Palenville, the other on the new view permitted into the spacious heart of my road-partner.

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CHAPTER IX

STONY CLOVE

OUR castle in Twilight Park, with Mrs. France to send us forth of a morning with a sort of culinary godspeed and with her father to receive us at night with the welcome of open fireplace and hunter's tale—this cozy castle of ours detained us until the snows gave up their siege and the roads lay smoking in the April sun. It was a well equipped center from which to sally. There was High Point to climb. There were the Wildcat and Santa Cruz ravines to explore. There was a marvelous point of view, discovered and Cooperized with the name of Hawkeye by Miss Clara Atlee, a ledge about two miles south along the eastern parapet, giving the valley view from a lair of wilderness. Find it if you can. I shall not give more details, for the explorer's sake or its own. Also beware of the bears. Then near by there is a bit of standing room only, whence you look down into an amphitheater of trees for which much of the Hudson Valley is the stage. There were the walks along the ridge, with the views from Clum Hill and the Onteora Park district to

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be looked over, and all the details of Manitou's best architect, whose work in the broad region capitaled by the Kaaterskill House was rich in surprise.

As Brute and I loafed about from place to place, we realized with the utmost satisfaction that we were n't seeing everything. In fact, for everybody who travels, I judge that those days of old-fashioned touristry are over. No more will men and women run around Europe gulping down cathedrals at the rate of two an hour. The silliness of absorbing mere numbers of things ended with the era that closed July 31, 1914. Baedeker went out with the lights of Rheims. There are fewer treasures now, but we will learn to treasure them more. For us Americans, particularly, it is a salutary lesson.

If one of those old-style travelers should come to Haines' Falls, what a fortnight of trotting he would have. He would be confronted by the same old dilemma: fourteen courses of scenery and dyspepsia, or three and a good digestion. Of course it is entirely possible to do the hundred miles of trails, to see the scores of waterfalls, to mark off on a list all the noted sights as viewed and got out of the way, to take a thousand photographs. There are names of places—Lemon-Squeezer, Druid Rocks, Elfin Pass, Fairy Spring, all of which happen to be quickly available from the

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Kaaterskill—that would make the usual nurse-maid water at the mouth to have a picnic in, with all the extras; trampled ferns, pickle-jars, and papers strewn around. But I beg of you to take your time. Inspect the great rocks of puddin'-stone with white plums baked in the brown dough in prehistoric ovens and then laid away in the glacial epoch to cool. Sit down on the great cliffs (not created primarily to carve your name on) and look off to sea—in your imagination. This great parapet was once a marine bluff. Against it surged tides so impetuous, upon it beat storms so tremendous, that our halcyon era must seem the Indian summer of its content. Most of all, look closely at the ankle-deep moss-mounds where you sit, each one a forest in miniature, with tiny ravines, bold ranges, and deserts ringed with green.

However much the gospel of work must be practised for our deepest satisfaction, it is he who obeys the idler's creed who enjoys the riches of nature. He who runs may read, but not every one who reads remembers and still less is able to grasp the full measure of the countryside speeding past. There is a wealth of underfoot and a width of overhead that your blind swallower of scenery misses as completely as that other amateur in living, the man who exists in the morrow and ignores to-day. If one could only chain a

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member of this haste-and-waste club within a glen, or moor him beside a bloom-edged lake for one whole day sometime, he might thank you for it. But there is a risk.

The other satisfaction we had, besides the delight of loafing along, was the coming home each night. Home may be where one hangs up his hat, but, I insist, only after he has hung it there once before. Even more important than the hat-rack standard is the quality of welcome. This is like the quality of mercy, only more versatile, and in our case most genuine. The tales of Mr. Layman would furnish forth a boys' series of Exciting Excitements in Exciting-Land. He had killed thirty-six bears before he was twenty-six. Being nearly eighty, he could remember the days when the settlers depended entirely on corn meal and game for their winter supplies. Yet, even at that, they lived so long that they became extremely frail. As far as I could ascertain, they never died; the wind blew them away.

Mr. Layman's father had told him tales more remarkable yet: Of Louis Wetzel, the great Indian-killer, whose favorite diversion was to sit in a cave, gobble like a wild turkey, and when an Indian appeared to secure the more gullible biped. The country motto was, apparently: Every Indian out of the way is one Indian less. Mr. Lindsay was another apt Indian-getter. One

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day six redskins materialized from the wood, as he was splitting rails. They were chestnut rails. Mr. Lindsay did not interrupt his work to kill those Indians just then. Soon his ax stuck, and he asked the six Indians who were grouped about, to pull the rail apart. They did; and then the rail, being chestnut, closed upon their sixty fingers. It was, of course, a simple matter to decapitate them *seriatim.*

Some nights we chose neighborhood gossip instead of tales of colonial prowess. There was one bit of history about the founding of Haines' Falls that hit Brute particularly hard on his ample funny-bone. Haines' Falls at first was completely Haines'. The Hainesness of it was sometimes upsetting to the chance visitor. One tourist was being driven in, and asked his guide who lived in the house they came to first. Abram Haines. In the second? Charles Haines. The third? Aaron Haines. The next? Captain Pete Haines.

"Heavens!" exclaimed the tourist. "Let 's take the other road."

But on the other road the three houses belonged to Levi Haines, Jesse Haines, and Uncle Jerry Haines. Out that tourist got.

And so did Brute and I—but for a different reason. We had decided that, as we were indulging in a magnificient indolence, we would make it pay for itself. I was to take notes for some magazine

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articles, Brute was to memorize the roads for summer exploitation. Sometimes it happens that the moment a vacation acquires a motive it loses everything else. We had already had a fortnight of superior freedom and were on our guard. Beneath the cuticle of laziness the dermis of doing something began to itch; and so, seizing a morning of exceeding promise, we once more became horses to our packs, engines to our shoes, and slaves to the map.

The most ambitious avenue for our stored energies was Hunter Mountain, the guardian to the north entrance of Stony Clove, the most observed of all observers. Hunter, the hypocrite, for long posed as the highest mountain in the Catskills. Slide, who betters him by two hundred feet, sat coy as Cinderella in the back mountains, unmeasured and unsung. Hearsay is stronger than theodolites. I shall never forget one ingenuous native whom we asked how much higher was a certain mountain that obviously rose several hundred feet above the one on which we all were standing. He said: "That ain't really higher. *They say* this is the highest mountain in the State of New York."

Hunter is a climb-repaying mountain. From the steel tower on the top the entire Catskill mountainland is visible. Stony Clove, the cross-bar of the letter H which is completed by the valleys

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of the Esopus and the Schoharie, is but a gash in mother earth. The mass of the southern Catskills rises in ranged domes, which on that morning dropped into gulfs made pearl-gray by the mists of melting snow. Westward the chain that walls the valley toward Lexington wandered away until it grew soft with lilacs and lavendars. The great expanses of leafless hardwoods gave an unreal tone even to the foreground. The rest of the scene was vibrating in the sun. The east was swallowed up in light, and the broad valley toward Stoppel Mountain shone with white fields and whiter roofs.

If you have your nerve with you, climb Hunter some forenoon that promises thunder. The north line of the Schoharie Valley becomes compact with clouds that stand for hours waiting for the signal to advance. Nowhere else can you find more beautiful concentrations of vapor. The rugged chain of hills seems to be continued in the mountainous masses resting on dark fields of larkspur blue. It will be a day when the southwest wind has brought reinforcements all the way from the Gulf of Mexico for the tremendous gun-play. If you know what is coming there will be thrills along your spine. From this lookout that controls every valley of approach you will see the small ravines darken, the sunlight pass from the plains, the concentration of opposing forces deepen in intensity.

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The breeze dies. A song-sparrow half way down the mountain sings once. A great gun rumbles far beyond the ranges, then another on the other flank.

By this time you, who have been half in doubt whether to race down to the bottom or to brave it out in the watchman's shelter, know that retreat is impossible. You resolve to stay on the tower to the last moment, and then if your time has come it will come. Allah is good.

Slowly the flanks close in, and distant flashes are followed by a long roar that ends in a sullen boom where the projectile struck. Suddenly your attention is caught by a line of gray. It rises from the horizon in an arc that widens as you look. The assault is on. In magnificent order the line advances. For a frightened moment you question whether you have been wise. The cannonade is now terrific, and from horizon to horizon drops a blinding barrage out of the inexorable blackness.

Over the top, across the valley, the wind has blotted out the world. You have one moment to live. A gigantic bolt falls upon the Shandaken Valley, and another leaps to the sky from Black Dome. If it were n't for the fire-warden beside you, you must retreat. In a vast fury of dust, drenching fire, and roar of artillery, the storm troops sweep across the valley. The village of Hunter is taken, the next range is swallowed up.

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A terrific thunder, piling down upon the darkness that was Tannersville, shakes the tower. The noise is overpowering, and you turn to go. The Powers have the range. Another broad stream of fire falls into Spruceton, and the roar, mingling with the cannonade of center and of the right, crushes the prostrate valleys. You are fighting to get down the tower. Wind, leaves, rain-shrapnel; the whole weight of the assault is on yon. In the cabin is the darkness of night, now shattered by blinding flashes, now doubly dark. The hurricane of rain batters at the defenses of the cabin, and hail-grenades explode upon the pane. At the supreme moment a shell tears the world asunder, and the whole universe seems yielding to its forces in a great débâcle.

I have not exaggerated. No one could. A well developed thunder-storm viewed from a point of vantage, particularly at the twilight hour, is as magnificent a spectacle as is offered to most of us. A great earthquake, a volcano in action, a modern battle—any of these may be far more impressive, particularly the last, which involves moral forces. But a thunder-storm is comparatively harmless. A barn or so, a tree or so, a man or two—of course there is a price for everything; but compared to the earthquake or the eruption the price is very small, and compared to the battle less than nothing, for no one is to blame

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for the destruction that may occur. Nowhere are thunder-storms so well staged as in the Catskills, and in the Catskills nowhere can they be seen to more comprehensive advantage than from the steel towers on Hunter, Tremper or Belle Ayre. Nor, strange to say, is there a much safer spot to look from. For, when the burning hoof of the lightning has raced too near, you can always visit with the fire watcher in his cabin near by, and be protected by the adjacent tower, which any wandering bolt would covet first. Time was when all of us children looked forward for about half a year to the feeble explosions of the noisy Fourth. Time might very easily be when some enterprising person will erect insulated bleachers and charge admission to as magnificent a spectacle as our continent affords. At present the towers are free.

All this time Brute and I have been shivering on Hunter. We are tired of far-reaching, impersonal scenery, and decide upon a raid into the comfortably contracted coziness of Stony Clove. It is late when we get there. We walk to Lanesville and take a long rest. Unconsciously we have done our very best by the Clove. Lateness and rest are just what it requires to bring out its best. It is beautiful, always. If there is any quiet bit of scenery that has had more injustice done it by the blather of tourist sketch and railroad guide, I have yet to read about it.

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Photograph by Brown Brothers

PLATEAU AND STONY CLOVE

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Photograph by J. B. Allison

HUNTER NOTCH—STONY CLOVE

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There follows the railroad's description. I am responsible for the italics, because I could n't bear for any one to miss the idea that the scenery through this pleasant valley is going to be "awfully grand."

"Geologists differ as to the probable cause of this cleavage of the *crags*. Steeple Mountain and Burnt Knob rise *abruptly skyward* over across the valley, and there are various other *soaring peaks* with *craggy crests* now coming into view which add *rugged grandeur* to the scene. . . . Edgewood, 1787 feet above the tide, . . . where a few acres of almost *perpendicular* meadows have been reclaimed from the *relentless grasp* of the great CRAG. . . ."

Well, there you get one notion: crags and crags and crags, until the neck is cricked and the head dizzy with the vertiginous display. One might almost suppose that the traveling public would hesitate to intrust itself to a passage imperiled by such overwhelming crags.

If you visit the place you will get another idea of it. You will see a valley winding, at a grade not at all embarrassing to motorists, to the two thousand foot level, and whose sides slope upward from a thousand to fifteen hundred feet higher. They are chiefly forested at the top. Near the northern end of the Clove the valley sides draw together, forming a gorge wide enough for a pike, a railroad, and a tiny pond. About as noticeable as the Clove's glaciers and volcanos

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are its soaring peaks and craggy crests. If one chooses to be maudlin about it and compare it with some of the foremost exhibits of Rocky Mountain scenery, the Stony Clove is a pathetic failure. But if one is willing to accept it as a thing of beauty in its own right, a leisurely stroll along the Clove can be as satisfying a walk as any that our united country can produce. It was a revelation to Brute and me that afternoon.

The first impression we obtained was of graceful proportions. Instead of frowning battlements and crushing ponderousness, the sides of the valley seemed to soar on broader wings and rise on more reposeful curves than those that water usually carves. Then came the color. The bottom meadows were already greening; blue streamers of wood smoke floated from the chimneys of housewives who would have early supper. Here and there slides of ruddy shale shone in the background, and higher lines of snow gleamed white along the barer ledges. Overhead clear blue. It was as fair a scene as is likely to greet two tired mountaineers at the close of any day.

If you will believe me that the Stony Clove is a pastoral of lyric beauty with one dramatic climax, instead of the roaring bloody gulch of the fictional folder, I hope that you will also believe that its beauties cannot be more than skimmed by him who trusts only to steam or gasoline for his scenic

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memories. It is about ten miles from Phœnicia to the Kaaterskill Junction, and the stroll is worth a day.

If the Mountain House is the eye of the Catskills, the Overlook the brow, Windham the lungs, and Slide Mountain the heart, then Phœnicia is the nerve center. It lies at the cross-roads of Nature, and as snug in its valleys as a moth in a muff. For merchantry it should be a strategic place to live. Every motorist who comes up the Esopus Valley from Kingston, or down the Esopus from the west, every traveler whose traffic delights the eye or dusts the nose of sellers of wares, must bisect Phœnicia. Yet, in a place where money is being made the people did not impress me as a lot of mere money-changers. Phœnicia has kept decent. She has not run to greenbacks at the expense of every other sentiment. She has been given a beautiful nest by Nature, and she has kept it sweet-smelling. Her stores are clean, her outsides painted, her bit of the earth keeps its charm. One does not have to forget any unpleasantness preparatory to enjoying the contentments of the Clove.

If you walk up from Phœnicia and follow the rails instead of the road, you will take your impressions from the more alluring vantage. The road keeps well to the bottom of the valley, the rails run on middle slopes. You get the heights

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and also the meadows spread in soft patches below.

Leaving Phœnicia a-sparkle in its mountain setting,—Tremper on the east, Romer on the south, Sheridan on the west,—there is a short distance through a hill-lane, and then the village of Chichester and the outspreading dale open upon one as the world opens to a Jack-in-the-box released. This village, with its Welsh beginnings, its half-Roman name, its German chair-making, its Lombardy poplars, its Old Glory on the pole—how typical of the American mosaic!

The rails now climbed a little. We loafed along after them, sat now on some cleared knoll or mounted a little higher to search the heart of this superb valley. More than refreshing it was to find that here, in one of the show-spots of the East, there had been no attempts to magnify Nature into a spectacle. There are some people to whom Nature seems obsolete, out of style, and ready for rearrangement. Every little while in the rich pine woods you will come upon an estate where the Most High has been set heavily upon a back seat and the reins given over to a landscape-gardener. It used to be the fashion to trim animals into the proper style, and it is still the fashion to level aged pines, make artificial lawns, and keep them raked clean of noisome anemones and the rank hepatica.

The kindly Stony Clovers have had truer sensi-

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bilities. When they settled this masterpiece of Nature, this wide-sprung, hospital ravine, they took Nature as she was, cleared a field here, threw a road there, but left everything else as humdrum and unprogressive as the Lord had made it. Consequently the tourist to-day finds great woods remaining, does not find the cliffs made interesting with advertisement. In the village where we spent the night we found heart-of-oak people. The closer to the soil men are, the less presumption they have, the less presumption, the less they perish from the earth. If it is a contest in longevity between high heels and the broad-toed boot, the last chapter is always written by the boot. High Heels complains that the simple life breeds simpletons. Boots retorts that summer folk are chatterers. It would require an interminable sitting of the jury to bring in a decision. Sufficient for Brute and me was the sight of an industrious people keeping the lap of these fair mountains sweet with cows and clover, without eye-sore or exploitation. Doubtless to them life hinged upon the price of pork; but it did not intrude duly into their conversation, and we found great eagerness to hear the latest news of France and our men-at-arms. Life in the Stony Clove, typical of the life in many of the Catskill valleys, seemed pliable at the top, steadfast at bottom, and wholesome through.

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Lanesville is a friendly village lying in the heart of the vale. The environment of enclosing mountain gave one the immediate sense of "all 's well with the world." Nothing untoward could intrude. Across the foot of the valley ran a splendid range, possibly distant Panther. Into the western sky rose Westkill, a glorious mountain-wall, with its inviting Hollow Tree ravine. An arc of green hill shut one in, breathing a peace susceptible only to little ills which a neighbor's sympathy could soothe. Valley life is very alluring to hill-walkers.

Above Lanesville the mountains close in. Of an afternoon black shadows flow down from the western ridges, like inexorable glaciers devouring the farms, the brook, the opposing hill. But in the night the cottage lights shine bravely out. One white and lonely house high on the mountain's shoulder, which was just about to surrender to the creeping shadows, left a picture as of an embodiment of struggle in my memory. It would need a poet to write its annals, a painter to arrest your glance with the heather-purple of that twilight glen. But when I said something about its pioneer loneliness to Brute, he replied: "I suppose they 've all gone to the movies."

That was the fun of being with Brute. You could never predict his reactions. Hungry, he would turn all the sanctities into a mockery.

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Moved by some scene of beauty, there was none more devout. Dependable at base, honest throughout, he let his moods play with the tendrils of his fancy as a current plays with submerged grasses, waving at the top, rooted at the bottom.

Edgewood brings the valley to a climax, sitting enthroned in the measure of its maturity. Only the narrow passage north remains of all the generous spaciousness below. At Edgewood the view is nearest to grandeur. Ahead, the Notch; behind, the winding smiling valley and the curved hills. The mountains attain a dignity seen rarely elsewhere in the Catskills. Seracs of shale crop out, and the shoulders of Hunter are still high above you.

The Notch is an impressionist carving in that most successful of all designs, the V. There is a little pond at the top, a sort of mild morass, then just the road and rail and the wind, working conscientiously at his bellows. Soon the road drops swiftly, the Clove is left behind, and your glance falls on old Clum, and the valley of the Schoharie.

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CHAPTER X

A CHAPTER ON SHOES

THERE are a lot of people who might like to walk—if they had ever tried it. Of all forms of getting about, walking is the most abjured. To anybody who has cycled or sailed or shot along in an automobile, there is nothing appealing in the prospect of going over the same ground at one tenth the speed for ten times as much exertion. Canal-boat or stage, horse-back or observation-car, canoe or even ski, but never, never (so I said) should my standards of expedient be lowered to the dust of a walking trip. Five miles on a Sunday afternoon, or even ten up some remote mountain if need be; but as for interminable distances by foot for extravagant lengths of time —might I be tied to a rocking-chair first. And then the shameful thing occurred.

"What 's the use o' leggin' it?"

That was Brute's query on the notable day on which he gave up his Ford and took to the trail. I have only one answer, yet. I may find more as the reformation progresses, but the "use o' leggin' it" is the ability to take the short and pre-

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ferred cut. A region traversable by gasoline, a mountain ascendable by electricity, or a country visitable by steam shall not abrade my boots. There are still mountains, however, up which one cannot be carried either in Pullmans or palanquins, still regions where the only roads are a foot wide and paved with pine-needles. Most curious of all, there are still vast countrysides, of which the Catskills is but one, where a wilderness alternates with villages to make a walker's holiday.

The secret of travel on good roads is a good car. The secret of the wilderness is the walker's, and his alone. Life cannot be read about. Neither can the woods. The delights of the woods are discussable only after they have been experienced. They must be experienced personally; nor is the least flavor of them to be got vicariously, any more than one can grow religious by hearsay. Walking is as personal a matter as growing up, and I no more propose to dilate upon my delight in walking (in the pathless woods) than I should propose to communicate my exact pleasure in the trout and bacon at the end of the trail.

The fact that I have been converted to walking (where riding is impossible), and that Brute now sees the use in leggin' it (where there are no other legs available) remains. And at the risk of exposing our low standards of equipment, we both

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think it is highly proper to outline the, for us, cardinal virtues of pedestrian outfit as applied to Catskill contingencies.

First as to the sins: There are two prime sins of the road: ambition and new shoes. Of the two the latter is the worse. Let it be with you a moral adage never to start out with untried shoes. Something is sure to happen. It is sure to. There is not even a sporting chance that it will not. It will occur—probably not before the fiftieth mile, perhaps not until the hundred and fiftieth. Then it does. A heel blisters, a sole-nail works through, a tendon succumbs to an unaccustomed last. There are a good many steps to a mile, a good many miles to a successful day; and if each step is taxed even .001 per cent.of pleasure, it is but a matter of distance until pleasure is bankrupt.

The reality is worse than that. At the second twinge the entire usury of torture is foreseen. Content flies at the first unholy intimation that there is something wrong. Imagination paints an endless series of such twinges. Not only the day at hand is instantly ruined, but imagination leaps the night, ruins the next day, sicklies the whole trip with its pale forecast of thought. And all because of one little *ouch*. And that because of a new shoe. As you revere serenity, do not yield to the allurements of new leather. Nor of low shoes.

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Nor of high, heavy boots. The army, which may advance upon its stomach, nevertheless has given much thought to its footwear, and a broken-in pair of army shoes is the best insurance of sheer comfort, uncontaminated with foreboding. Also it is not necessary to carry another pair. They will be wet? Then stuff paper inside them for the night to hold the shape. It is better to put them on damp than bone-dry. Socks will do the rest.

Socks, neither, should be new. By socks I do not mean that sort of hosiery worn in cities. Traffic with nothing but the stout socks sold to lumberjacks which you have laid in for occasion when you were passing through Bangor or Quebec or back-woods villages in the Adirondacks. They will wade you through water and see you up mountains without resort to needle and thread. They will guard you against chill or chafe. A pair for feet and a pair for your pack are enough. On a cold night put the dry pair on. They will be your best friend, and the only thing a man has the strength and nerve to put on wet and continue happy. Properly socked and shoed, your trip's success is half assured. The next hold on comfort is taken when you confine the loose ends of your trousers in something, better sock than shoe, but into something golf-wise, riding-wise, or woodjack-wise. If they flap they tear and collect the mud. Wet they weigh and look worse than if you

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had cut off the cuffs and fixed them debonairly down. It adds ten per cent. to the length of a day.

A flannel shirt is the only thing ever invented that is more comfortable than bed. By day, by night, sometimes by day and night, it does its duty in a transcendental way. There is nothing that you can demand of it which it will not perform. Is it a cold night? It keeps you warm. Is it a hot day? It is less clammy than linen. Has the rain been raining for a week? It maintains your bodily heat so that that week shall not be your last. In every emergency the shirt on your back is right there. It, unlike the matches, the food, the rain-coat, the fire on the hearth, has not been left at home. It is the open sesame to a logger's cabin, where any other costume would cause distrust. It will be tolerated in the hostelry of fashion near the woods, be you but washed and sunburned. It also can be washed—though seldom is. No black fly can pierce it, no irritable thornbush is likely to tear it. It is cheap, and lasts forever. But I see you smile; you have three already. For a top dressing on our winter trip we wore mackinaws, a close rival of the flannel shirt in versatility and satisfaction. A sweater under something might do, but a mackinaw is better, looks neater, and has pockets. In summer it is too heavy. The lightest kind of rain-coat carried

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in the knapsack is worth while then for the transient shower.

My English knapsack, with its drawing-string instead of buckles, its outside pockets, and its bull-dog durability, was large enough to take the extra underwear, socks, pajamas, toilet things, Red Cross stuff, a little sewing kit, camera films, maps, compass, note-books, raisins, and chocolate. With the summer rain-coat it weighed twelve pounds. On top I could have added a blanket, a fry-pan, plate, knife and spoon, a little corn meal, bacon, tea, and sugar, thus becoming independent for short cross-country divagations.

But I have never been able to regard myself as a pack-animal; at least, in the Catskills. There is a very great distinction between a walking trip and the camping trip where you walk. In the latter, staged preferably in the Adirondacks, one wears a pack-basket, roams over a district completely unpeopled, endeavors to lay the foundation of the cuisine with trout. One walks because there don't happen to be canoe routes where one wants to go. The walking is incidental to the fishing, the mountaineering, the fun of keeping house without a house. One carries a tent, blanket, food, and utensils gladly because the delights of the trip are worth the price of conveyance. You could n't go unless you went that way. While, on the other

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hand, a walking trip is a light-hearted, almost empty-handed, nearly unplanned affair.

In the Catskills there are too many charming people to drop in upon to warrant the Adirondack style. If Brute and I had evaded farm-houses for our night's stops, we should also have missed three of the most interesting groups of people it has been my luck to know. Our country is so broad, so varied in opportunity, so different are the methods of travel that the peculiarities of each section demand, that by the time you have fitted each method to its locality you have tried every kind. even if there are several ways of seeing the Yellowstone, the Maine woods, the Catskills, there is one way that best brings out the genius of the place, the one and only way that commandeers its utmost resources.

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CHAPTER XI

BRUTE'S LITTLE GAME

HOW real, how similar to life, that, after extolling the pleasures that our mode of wayfaring hatched out, after disclaiming all conveyance in favor of leggin' it, how perversely natural that Brute and I should climb into an automobile!

Yet there were three excuses: we were tempted, Brute's heel had been chafed, and spring, which had been dammed up by winter until the north-wind barriers could no longer hold, burst through and overflowed the country. It was my second spring within a month. This time the tides were even stronger, the flood of sunlight more compelling, the roads more bibulous.

To the north of us lay the Windham country, and to the west also untoured provinces that, from Hunter Mountain, had looked worth while. We stood on the swift highway—swift because the current of slush-water was at the lowest three miles an hour—ready to toss the coin. If it came down *E Pluribus Unum* we would be off to Windham, but if *In God We Trust* we should go west. Destiny, I 'd have you remember, is inseparate from

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character. Our characters were to be awarded more than a ten-cent destiny. At the very moment when we were to commit our futures to God or the Union, an automobile, mire-covered, but with a back seat empty, slowed down, the driver motioned to us to get in, and without comment in we got.

This was at 9.10 A. M., the beginning of as superior a round of absurdity as I have ever gratuitously indulged in. The only extenuation I seek is that the growth of the Game—the name we used to cover our later foolishness—was gradual and not premeditated art. Otherwise our face would blush.

It was an excellent country for a hydroplane. Slush ran down every declivity and collected at the bottom. Each hour the sun added an inch of water, I should judge, to the general level. Our driver was greatly pressed for time, we thought, for with us safely in he soon attained a mud-splattering impetus that prevented conversation. Only once he turned and said:

"Where you going?"

"Can't say," we replied; "where are you?"

"Jewett."

Never having heard of Jewett, we could not very well object to going there, and settled back to enjoy the unusual voyage. It reminded me of those Channel crossings when the newspaper warnings

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Photograph by J. E. Allison

THE ESOPUS NEAR SHANDAKEN

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PHŒNICIA

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would announce winds "fresh to stormy." But our automobile was a gallant side-wheeler. Along the level we threw an even sheet of water on either side. Then we would come to a down plunge into the obscure gulf at the bottom. Owing to the extreme importance of our captain's getting to Jewett, there was no slowing up. Fortunately, we rode the waves well. Again and again a breaker would curl over the radiator and dash in angry spray against the wind-shield. In our back seat we braced ourselves against the ground-swell and listened to the hiss and swirl with considerable enjoyment. There is this one thing about a devastating pace produced by some one else's throttle: you won't abate the danger by taking thought. If you have confidence, stay in; if you have n't, get out. But, in either event, indulge in a little enjoyment.

The day we were to have gave us foundations for comparison of towns. The character and appearance of Catskill towns, which are really only villages in their teens, vary enough to make a sermon on. Nearly all of them began in the tanning business. To-day the pleasure that they give to the eye and the nose differs with a difference that reaches to the very roots.

There are Catskill communities that express all the civic virtues. Roxbury, to mention one, gladdens the eye and the intelligence. It must spend

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fortunes in white paint. But the result is prosperity, comfort, progress, and self-respect. The splendid trees along its street are kept in order. The library is full and immaculate. The stores are clean, the bank doubtless overflowing. There is a church for the pious, and a park for the rest—in fact, several churches and an endless park; for the hills come down to the Delaware as gracefully as deer to water, and woods invite one from a town that one is loath to leave.

How differently other Catskill towns make one feel: as if immediate flight were the one grateful prerogative left to their inhabitants. One needs to travel to the raw frontier to find dingier or more calamitous-looking villages than some of the conglomerations Brute and I passed through. There is some excuse for the frontier towns, but none for these. The stark and paintless parade on the prairie, the wooden shanties in the desert, are but for overnight. One knows that the next tornado will get them, anyway. But in the Catskills they should build for old age. There may be poverty, but no poverty such as one finds in older countries. In Italy, in Cornwall, along the Zuyder Zee there is poverty, but at least it is clean and often picturesque.

The truth is that half the boarding-house towns in America are still rectilinear dumps. I wonder how long we shall have to wait for a Town Board

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of Art, with powers to prescribe the minimum of ugliness allowable. Even the Boards of Health might be given such powers. Vines are more sanitary than tin cans, shining creeks than open sewers. Trees are less expensive than awnings. Paint is cheaper than microbes. I should tremble for some of the mud-colored crimes of the architects if Elisha should pass by. He would call down the fires once more.

Early in our wanderings Brute and I hit upon a way of deciding upon the house wherein we should put up. If there were several to choose from, we invariably took the one painted to a semblance of prosperity. If there were several such, we took the one with geraniums in the window. People who take care of flowers take care of food. And since, doubtless, all travelers are swayed by appearance as much as we, the future of the spotless towns in the Catskills—and there are several—is much easier to predict than of those dingy dens one occasionally meets.

Our barge was heading down the Schoharie Valley, and, despite the heavy sea, we had thimblefuls of view. All along the south ran a continuing range, gaping infrequently, and carrying one's vision up until you felt a little thrill as at the apex of a swing. Perhaps this was our motion, but I think not. The south side of the valley is very fine. The static view to be had from Onteora

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Park, giving the bulk of Plateau Mountain, the yawn of Stony Clove, and the broad dignity of Hunter and his clan, is repayment for the climb. But our first impression, our running view, caught between lurch and tumble in the bright freshet of sunlight and snow water, will never be overplaced.

Despite the flourish of our progress, we ran over neither urchins nor poultry in the towns. The road continued toward Lexington and Prattsville, but a few miles past Hunter our Jehu swung to the right and we began to mount into as fine a stretch of country as any one has had the effrontery to describe. On one hand the dark swiftness of the little Eastkill fled from hemlock shadow into glitter of sun, then like a trout sparkled back again into its cover. It was utterly charming, utterly ingenuous. I have never seen anything like the Catskill streams for gripping one's memory so lightly yet with so firm a hand. Mental pictures of them do not subsist on the condition of time. Once in the mind, they are there forever. Decades from now they will show as bright in my inward eye as did Wordsworth's octogenarian daffodils. Repeatedly, during that month of flowing April, I found those eager, spiritual little streams covering the blank of consciousness with the hieroglyphics of their glamour. There come back pictures of the blue ranges, the lower hillsides quilted with wood-lot and pasture, the curving roads, and the

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tins shining on the maple-trunks they drained; but clearest of all are the swift streams.

The uplands around Jewett are a great sugar country. The mottled bark of maples, the glint of cans, were on every hand. To the south, valleys dropped toward the Schoharie, and rolling highlands carried the horizon. In the distance the hardwood forest seemed to close in and decorations of conifer darkened its breast. Truly it was a lovely country to ride through, and as the progressive depth of mud caused a slackening of our pace, I had time to wish that we were going to put up at the attractive farms which we passed at considerable intervals. If there was anything which I should feel confident of recommending without having tried, I might safely warrant that there would be good fare, sweet beds, and sufficient variety of amusement in the country around the Eastkill.

And now the gentleman our carrier, having rebounded to his home whence doubtless he had earlier sprung that morning, set us down. Spoiled by such swift society, we were unloaded upon the road willy-nilly. The sun had not only returned to its season, but promised to overshoot it in the direction of summer. In a trice we had been carried from the half-wild region of the Stony Clove to a well cultivated demesne. Suddenly we became averse to wading. All that waddle are not

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geese, perhaps, but they feel like 'em, and as we started off on the five-mile hike to the state road for Windham the germ of the Game was already depositing a shameful idea in each one of our brain-cells, as the cow-bird does her egg, leaving it to be hatched by circumstance.

If one can call the sun a circumstance, then one might have said that the hatching would soon take place. It beat upon us as we slopped along our canal. Brute had just been reminded of his sore heel, when the noise of a motor brought us to a halt. This time it was a truck. By merely looking intelligently wistful, the invitation was secured. For the second time that morning, the boy and I climbed aboard for some strange port of call. Nothing mattered since we were out of the mud.

Cruising on a truck had certain advantages. The additional time available gave one an opportunity to digest the scenery for which swifter flight had created the appetite. Also it made the captain, quite weary of navigation, eager to converse. For a while Brute seemed strangely immersed in reverie. But the range of the driver's gossip became so wide and his ability to eke out a commonplace narrative with personals so vivid that he soon joined me as a listener. We lost the white spire of Jewett's church, careened down the hill, well called Prospect, into East Ashland, rode

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into Windham and beyond, still listening. Only when he threw her again upon the starboard tack that would bring us into Hunter did I request to be set down.

"Well, what for?" inquired Brute, peering after the vanishing truck.

"Everybody has said we must see Windham heights. We 're nearest now."

"Do you mean to *walk?*"

"It is n't deep enough to swim.

"Why not keep on riding till it dries up?"

"How ingenious!" I said. But sarcasm ricochets from Brute. He was standing, intent upon the distance, looking altogether unsubduable by any element, be it mud or water. Evidently his brain-cells had hatched and the germs of the Game were already active, for they soon gave tongue.

"We can keep on riding till the roads dry up and blow away," was his comment on my doubt, "if you only follow the rules of the Game."

"Which are?"

"First, wait for an automobile. Second, have it stop for you."

"A very wise rule," I could not help saying. "The third?"

"Look here," he replied, somewhat nettled. "Nothing in particular if you don't want to. I thought it 'd be a good way to get a lay of the country."

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Despite the maturity of his brain and brawn, Brute was very much a boy at heart, and his face so fell at the thought of giving up his new scheme of transportation that a laugh escaped me.

"I 'm game," I insisted, "for a couple of rounds, anyway. It sounds only a little more brazen than holding a man up at the point of a pistol. The third rule is?"

"The third rule is to take the first car that comes along and not to care shucks where it 's going."

"That suits me perfectly—for instance, this."

A big Buick swept by in a lavish spectacle of mud, some of which I could still probably find on my clothes if I brushed hard.

"Now," continued Brute in a matter-of-fact manner, "that car scores five points for the opponents. If a Ford outwits us it counts ten points, because it is harder for a Ford to escape. Each ride nets us five points. Are you on?"

I was. The Buick's mud bath had left me callous to any of the slighter modesties. It was going to be a contest between us two and the world on wheels, and although I did not anticipate much edification geographically, I had to own to a curiosity in the practical problem that Brute had laid open for solution. So long as I should taste the mixture of shale and slush so liberally showered upon me by the Buick, I would be "on." With the dramatic art that provides the effect

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while obscuring the means, Brute bade me mount into a new Cadillac that had just tendered its services. The Game had begun with a score of five to five.

I have no intention of detailing the experiences of that day. If you wish to call us names, I pray you temper them with the knowledge that our opponents won; though the margin was slight and due entirely to the politeness of our brigandage. We began to develop a technique of hold-up, which never, however, overstepped the boundary of drawing-room behavior.

For instance, a car approaches. We are walking away from Hunter. We deprecatorily detain it for information. "Sir, how far is it to Hunter?" If the driver be mortal he will exclaim, "But, gentlemen, you are going the wrong way!" We are silent. If he, too, is a gentleman, he offers us a seat thither. For this, according to the chivalry of the Game, he gets a cigar from each. Thus the Game develops ethics. Indeed, if our chauffeur brings us to the hour of refreshment, he is invited to the meal. The Game is expensive.

That night we slept within four miles of the place wherefrom we began the Game. We had traveled, we calculated, about two hundred miles. It had taken eleven vehicles to accomplish this. We had been as far to the northwest as Stamford, to the south as Arkville. Three times had we

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driven up the Stony Clove, and twice around the Ashokan Reservoir. One gentleman had had dinner at our expense in Kingston, and some may still be smoking our cigars. We had obtained a very clear notion of the conventional Catskill routes.

That night we slept, but only after the Comic Muse had got tired and let us alone. Viewed from the cool pinnacles of the usual, it had been a day of progressive imbecility. Talked over as between two of the principals getting ready for bed, it had been a harvest of hilarity.

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CHAPTER XII

OUT WINDHAM WAY

THE window of our room looked out upon a glistening morning. A range of mountains thrust a high sky-line against the early sun. We were arrogantly fresh in spirit from our day of rest, and it did not take much eyeing of the map to arrange an all-day tramp that would give us new country and keep us from the roads. Rationing at a corner store, we set out along the Batavia Kill.

This stream, levying tribute from the spectacular amphitheater of mountains that enclose Big Hollow, is another one of those superlatively enchanting brooks that people love more than they can praise. Fifteen littler brooks unite to lend it volume before it has run three miles. Every few minutes one crosses water—a poor valley for the devil, but good for Tam o' Shanter.

The great girdle of mountains about the Hollow builds a magnificent wall of green. On the south the long range culminates in twin peaks, Thomas Cole and Black Dome, turns north with Black Head as a pivot, buttresses the east with an

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even-topped range, swings to the west at Acra Point to Burnt Knob, rises to Windham High Peak, follows southwest along Elm Ridge, and almost yokes-up with the Thomas Cole Range at the village of Big Hollow. Within the valley lies seclusion. From no point can the wind blow with uninterrupted force. Every way is banked with hard-wood greens, darkening near the tops of the mountains into the soberer hues of hemlock.

Thomas Cole was one of the artists who had a sincere love for this region. He was born in England and brought up on the Continent, and it speaks well for his sensibility to fineness that he could settle in Catskill, devote his attentions to the lesser magnificences of these mountains, and still write to the United States Consul at Rome:

"Neither the Alps nor the Apennines nor Etna itself have dimmed in my eyes the beauty of the Catskills. It seems to me that I look on American scenery, if it were possible, with increased pleasure. It has its own peculiar charm—a something not found elsewhere."

Very appropriately, something of that "peculiar charm" is found in the vicinity of the mountain named for Cole. The "something not found elsewhere" is nowhere more easily caught than in the loveliness of this Windham region. Cole's sentence re-illustrates the truth, so easily overlooked, that the value of mountains resides very

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little in their measurements. Their virtue lies in their sweep of slopes, their beauty of contours, and the appeal of their covering, whether it be forest, rock, or snow. Largeness may engross the eye, but if at the expense of nobler properties, one emerges sooner or later from the spell and turns to other things. Painters have long known this, and their canvases refuse the elephantine for its own sake.

Black Dome is, of all these mountains, the stiffest climb, but the most worth while: so I have heard, and repeat the rumor—never having climbed it. Its summit is 3,990 feet above the sea and 1,700 above the end of the road, which is about a mile and a half from the top. As we wanted not so much the view of the nest of mountains to the south as the general outlook to the north and west, we determined to attempt Windham High Peak by compass. It was Brute's introduction to the use of what he called the "clever little box."

The art of walking in the woods is susceptible to the perfecting influences of experience and thought. There are all the stages noticeable in other arts, from urban beginnerhood to Indian mastery. There are a dozen ways of putting down your foot. Nearly everyone, for instance, complains about coming downhill, because nearly everyone touches the ground first with the toe or

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ball of the foot instead of with the heel. If, on a down grade, you put your heel down first, and, allowing your foot to rock forward, end your step with the toes, there is no jar, no strain on the knees. Your progress is more nearly even, and will approach Indian speed.

Walking in the woods without tearing off your clothes, breaking your legs, and sounding like a steam tractor is an art. To walk through them to a fixed destination is a science instinctive in the old-timer, if we are to believe the tales, but certainly not instinctive in the average summerer. Yet, if he has not reached that awful age when immediate comfort is the sole demand, the average summerer is liable to want to wander in the woods. He is liable, I say, at least to the impulse. There are many considerations ready to balk him in the heat of his desire,—clothes, companionship, convenience,—but it is not impossible that he should find himself in the woods. Once there, it is equally not impossible that he should not find his way out.

Or, at least, for an uncomfortable while. I have not heard of anybody being fatally lost in the Catskills for several years, although this still happens annually in the greater forests of the Adirondacks and Maine. In the Catskills every stream runs by a farmhouse sooner or later, while in those other regions a stream is often quite content to

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end up in an uninhabited pond. Getting lost there is no fun even for professionals, and careless wandering is no proper amusement for amateurs. In the Catskills the only danger would be disablement; for, granting legs, any fool can follow water.

The compass supplies the necessary element of safety to all who walk the woods. Mostly it is just your friend. But in the stress of doubt it must be your dictator. It draws you your straight line and commands you to follow it. Working by it is a test of faith in one's self. You throw yourself into the wilds with that magnetic phantom up near Hudson's Bay for your sole ally. Your life hangs, not like Damocles' upon a thread, but upon a needle. The test comes some day, when, in the twist of a swamp or the sudden disposition of the sun to wander, you disbelieve. The needle points wrong. The silly box is ailing, seems no longer inspired. Perhaps, you think, the iron in your knife or in some rock has addled it. But woe if your faith wobble.

Or, again, perhaps you 've confused the tips of the needle. You think the silver tip points north instead of the iron. That is a fatal self-suggestion. One doubt is equivalent to one demise. A doctor can as easily perform an autopsy upon himself as you straighten out your fancy if you have allowed that thought to come There are two ways

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of escape, either of which must be prepared beforehand. Buy a compass with N marked on the proper end of the needle, or on the back of the box scratch some designation by which you shall know in the hour of trial. Scratch this before you leave home. Otherwise there is sure to come a moment when the world turns upside down and water runs uphill, and, like the children of Nineveh, you cannot tell your right hand from your left.

We reached the top of Windham when shadows were shortest. Opal lands fled from our mountain's foot and into the mellow haze of noon, dark woodlot and white farm alternating until they were lost in their vague companionship.

We had our lunch on the top of the mountain, in a dining-room walled with small firs, carpeted with snow, ceilinged with remote white clouds, and pictured with glimpses of the bottomlands. It was furnished with a rock for table, a log for chairs. A slow-moving breeze came through the balsam windows, and the chirp of snow-birds with the call of the chickadee were our entertainment. Peace, comfort, that inner harmony, which alone is supreme happiness, were ours.

"Down there they 're running about and worrying just like us a few days ago," said Brute, "and here we are as free and easy as a school of fish. Why can't we keep this feeling down there?"

"Full-size people do."

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Photograph by C. O. Bickelmann

OUT WINDHAM WAY

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Photograph by Howard Burtt

VALLEY OF THE WESTKILL

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"Well, to-day 'll fit us for a size larger, anyway."

The top of the plateau was cross-harried with the tracks of snowshoe rabbits. I should like to have had along one of these literary naturalists who read so easily their storiettes in the snow. Here was a volume of Dumas cut into serial lengths and published without the pages being numbered. The boy and I attempted to unravel a detective story in forty parts written by a large jack-hare. But he brought in so many characters and acted so unaccording to Doyle that we lost the thread in the general scramble. The newspaper of the wild is dramatic, captivating, and different from others, because it prints only the news. But it is easy to overlook, difficult to decipher, and editions succeed each other so fast, at least in rabbit-land, that it is impossible to keep up with the times.

The only way to read animal news-sheets or to enjoy nature in any of her embodiments is to obey the dictates not of conscience but of the heart. There is a certain type of earnest soul who frets herself into discontent because she is not making the most of her opportunity. If she is in the woods, the fact that she does not know the names of all the mosses worries her. Because she has the chance she ought to improve it, she says—admirable ambition, but miserable practice. I

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believe that the true nature-lover is a more desultory kind. He does not castigate himself because he feels, as July comes on, that his interest in birds is waning. Even the birds' interest in each other wanes then. He does not prod himself into a fury of investigation over the different fungi, careering through the woods with four volumes under his arms. He goes about his fishing, and notes the fungi by the way.

Nature will not suffer herself to be gone at, hammer and tongs. Neither is she an example of steadiness. The man who allows his moods to follow hers lets less escape him than the man who must enjoy nature at any cost. A goal can be a fatal barrier to progress.

"Would n't it be bully to spend enough time up here to get full of it!" exclaimed Brute.

A summer night on a mountain-top makes time standards seem incoherent. You begin to size up eternity after you 've spent about an hour on your back looking up—at Night.

"It 's pretty huge," I said, "but I 'd like to do it again."

"I 'll do it with you," said Brute, putting out his hand.

I took it, but limited the moon in which we should take our dip into eternity with a specification of warmth. As my memory groped back to that other time on Tahawus' top with Lynn, it

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also brought back that great line about Mount Blanc:

"And visited all night by troops of stars."

We sauntered along the ridge of Windham High Peak, speculating on the airs of hares, and examining the tracks of deer to discover the sex, size, and state of mind. The afternoon was in mid-bloom, and very still. All the beasts heard us before we saw them. In one place deer tracks showed that a certain south-facing depression was a favorite haunt, and we found where they had slept. The whole mountain seemed a preferred range of theirs. Although the gradual increase of population is islanding the wooded heights and limiting their grounds, the game-wardens know their job, and if the State will make central sanctuaries wherein there shall be absolutely no killing there should be deer enough to grace the whole Catskill country. Unfortunately, deer do not distinguish sufficiently between their own provender and hand-grown cabbages. They draw no distinctions between wild oats and domestic. It is possible to consider the gentle doe that regularly devours your corn as—anything but an object of love. There are better ways than extinction, however, of excluding even the unruly doe.

East Windham is a pleasant village for sound

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sleep, and in the morning the inhabitants have merely to roll over in bed to exchange their views of dark wooded heights for variable plains. The expanse of lowland to the northeast wears lovely draperies of white mist of an early morning, and at all times is a barometer to depend on. In clear weather the farms and woodlots and hedgerows, villages and fattened hills, shine out with clear outlines, like a Mozart melody. But, when a change is making the color harmonies grow richer, the counterpoint becomes confused, and one hears Debussy's "Afternoon of a Faun" blending into twilight adagios of Beethoven. Then, if there should be a moon, down the valley sound the flutes and violins of Mendelssohn, elfin-wise. It was well when the first settler slept on the eaves of such a view. . . .

"Are you asleep?" I followed up my inquiry with a pillow.

Brute opened an eye and grinned, the very picture of a loafer, sunburned with snow-glare, sprawling beneath much blanket, limp and lazy as an invalid. Suddenly his nature changed. He grabbed a pillow and let it hail upon me, gently as a pile-driver, shouting:

"Sure; I 'm sound asleep. This is only a nightmare."

The nightmare, unhitched and quite untractable, raged until the furniture began to show signs

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of wear. Yet exercise that would have left us faint two weeks before seemed but a trifling appetizer now, and at the breakfast-table we determined on a genuine cross-country from mountain-top to mountain-top, which we named the Stunt of the Seven Summits. Nor need it mar the alliterative effect to say that ere nightfall we did nine.

Have you ever felt so fit that it hurts to be still? That is where a walking trip will put you if you don't exceed your strength at first. Good sleep, good food, and a refusal to fatigue is the result of regular stint—say ten miles at first, which will become twenty at last. The habit of ten miles in the morning, six in the afternoon and four after supper is soon acquired, and becomes, I may say without trying for effect, almost incidental to the day's work. Once acquired, how one scorns the mood that tempted one to sit on club porches or, worse, within sealed libraries! Yet, once more at home, the dust of the road falls from one, the trolley, the automobile, or the train must be taken for a two-mile trip, the window-seat is tenable only if the window be closed. It hurts to move. Thus does flesh round out the intellect!

The Stunt of the Seven Summits looked well on paper. The range of mountains that begins so auspiciously at Acra Point, and takes even more credit to itself for Windham High Peak, does

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obeisance at East Windham before it continues its course northwestward. It was to puff—the first pull that brought us to the summit of Mount Zoar. Although there had been a crisp frost, the air seemed to intimate that there was a softness just around the corner. While we kept to the sun-sheltered side of the ridge the snow was comfortably hard and progress fast. We soon reached Ginseng, summit number two, and were careful not to take the spur, which lures one to the south. Keeping along the ridge for an hour or more, we were only a little bothered by contours and not much by brush. Occasionally the ax, a slightly larger brother of the small "scout" ax, was a help, and the map, eked out by observation and a few timely hints from the compass, got us safely to number three, Mt. Hayden.

Next came Nebo. He who named these peaks had evidently primed himself well with the Old Testament before setting out on his christening expedition. He did n't make use of all his opportunities, for there was an eerie place that the Witch of Endor might have utilized, and to the north obviously ran the Valley of Jehoshaphat. We hastened over to Pisgah, a scorner of Nebo with an altitude of 2,885. By this time we were so elated with our progress on the large-scale map that we spurned the easy road that we had had to cross. A large-scale map is valuable,

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among other things, for just this propelling power. It is discouraging to crawl through thickets and clamber up ravines from dawn till dusk, only to find that you have advanced an inch on the map. But, where every inch means a mile, a good day will take you from sheet to sheet, and lure you by that appeal to voracity so deeply planted in every true American. You will eat up the miles by the finger-length.

On Pisgah we had lunch, and from it a view that would have done credit to Zion. Westward extends a ridge from which the ground falls away with all the emphasis of parachuting. Then there is a broadening out of the summit, which takes to itself the name of Richtmyer Peak. Thence our course shifted to southwest for another hour, and upon Richmond Mountain, 3,213 feet, grew a spruce from which spread a view over new lands. There was considerable haze, but we could make out the basin-like valley of the Manorkill on the northwest. On the west rose Huntersfield, while to the south Ashland sat at the bottom of long slopes.

We were now getting fairly tired. The snow was soft everywhere, and suddenly our efforts became noticeable. Our wanderings would n't have been more than ten miles for a crow, but we were n't crows and some of them had been vertical. We had passed Ashland Pinnacle when the ques-

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tion had to be answered: should we do Huntersfield? It loomed dark against the sun. There was something satanically inviting in the idea of topping this culmination of the range. Besides, it would be our tenth peak. Who invented the decimal system, anyway! It was that decided us, I believe.

A traveler possessed of either ambition or a sense of duty must never blame others for his misfortunes. If this human monstrosity aims at a mountain-peak that is over his height, and then in the face of obstacles persists in directing himself toward it, he can expect to be lonely and unhappy. Brute and I were to experience the reward of such virtues in a measure unprecedented in our ethical past. Quite exhausted by our moral victory in deciding to continue, we sat down to rest on number nine, called Lost Mountain. Had we only accepted the omen of this name, had we been the slightest bit open to pagan superstition, we might have been spared the crown of martyrdom that we were about to wear. But, alas, there was no such tendency in our make-up. We must surmount Huntersfield or perish, we said. We surmounted it—and perished.

I can truthfully lay our undoing to the cat. It was getting distressfully late, and we were very tired. But we came to something that could have been nothing else but what it was—a wild-cat's

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track. Although I had never seen one, there was no mistaking the pussy-paws, as large as a man's palm, in the soft snow; the single track that followed one fallen log after another, occasionally making jumps of a couple of yards; the occasional detour around a bush, perhaps for birds. We had listened to enough stories about wild-cats to be a little suspicious of their presence, for the common is rarely made a marvel of by woodsmen; but, on the other hand, wild-cat skins were brought in, two or three a winter. Here we were on the trail of one. It is not to be wondered at that we let the sun go his way while we went ours and the cat's.

A stimulus like that completely banishes the tired feeling. We followed our beast for a mile or more, then lost it in a dense thicket—lost it, not because of the denseness, but because the sun, which had been withdrawing little by little like a woman at a court presentation, suddenly turned and bolted. It left us not only in the dark, but in the woods somewhere, the place not specified. Brute looked at me, and I looked at him. As we could n't see each other very plainly, it did n't matter.

My only criticism of the Catskills as mountains is their reluctance to come to the point. If Huntersfield had been a Rocky Mountain, all we should have had to do would have been to keep going up,

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with assurance that we should finally be able to balance on the apex. Huntersfield, so aptly named, we could tell from the map as well as from experience with other Catskills, was a nest of associate tops, the highest of which would be disguised by forest, deceptive slopes, and a level summit. Our one object was clearly to reach a house, and not to bother with a peak that would play a sort of mountain tag with us. Yet we preferred to come out on the south side, and thought that, if possible, we might take in the crest of the ridge on the way.

It is not generally realized that there are very few nocturnal animals, that is, animals that prefer the hours of night between ten and four. Almost all animals prefer the two twilights, after sunset and before dawn, for their roaming. This is a preference that Brute and I can now very readily understand. Twilight for us, though ominous, was distinctly agreeable compared to the inner darkness that soon bundled us up and stowed us away in its light-tight compartment. If all the poets who sing about the stars could recognize how very feeble they are, they might take up incandescent bulbs or something worth while. That night I would have traded in all the glories of Orion for one electric torch.

Our assets were a few matches, a great deal of time, and Brute's temperament. Not that the

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things he said were such pearls of either wit or wisdom, but his running comment and the warm contagion of his laugh were balm to fatigue. He extemporized a song on mountain-climbing, with the refrain, "Every little bit more is a little bit less," and we plodded up with hunger and weariness held temporarily at bay.

Nothing is very difficult if you tackle it in small enough bits. Quite careless of consequences now, we bent all our energies upon not breaking our legs. We also aimed uphill. Occasionally a light spot would deceive, and often a mass of evergreen detain us; otherwise it was n't so bad. Yet we dare not go fast. Even at our snail pace, a dead limb caught Brute's trousers, and I heard the rip. "Ain't we just tearin' along!" was his comment.

For an hour we went up grade. We must have gone a mile. Then, as unexpectedly as rewards should come, came ours. The trees fell away on all sides of us; the ineffectual stars once more assumed their sovereignty. We were on the peak of either Huntersfield or some other mountain just as good, and the idea that dwells on all mountain-tops occurred to Brute and me at the same moment.

"We shook on it this morning; are you game?" I asked.

"I 'd rather stay here a week than grub my way down in that blackness."

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Thus it came about that we set ourselves the job of being comfortable in the snow, with nothing between us and the North Star.

The night was quiet and the temperature only a few degrees below freezing. It was but little labor to scrape away the snow from a rock-ledge, to upholster it with branches from the small balsams, to start a fire. With the fire going, it was easy to get more substantial wood, and in the light and warmth a midnight snack of raisins, crackers, and chocolate found its way to a place predestined to enjoy it.

Then we talked. While the things we talked about were not very relevant to this book I can say that they helped to light that gulf of darkness between man and man that can never be entirely penetrated, but that broadens from the spark of acquaintance through the faint glow of intimacy into the steady shine of friendship. Later we both nodded off.

I woke to find the east red in the face from the cold, our fire out, and gray clumps of frosted bushes huddling in the dim light. Brute stirred. In two hours we were discussing the day's plans over griddle-cakes and coffee in a hospitable farm-house kitchen near Red Falls.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE WINTER WOODS

THE Catskills are a happy meeting-ground of north and south. In spring they are not too far north to attract and harbor tropic birds, or to nourish flowers that must have warmth. In winter they are not too far south to know the arctic visitants and the dry cold of the perfect season. The Catskills give you the open hard-wood forest, and yet surprise you with an aromatic mountain-top of balsam or a ravine of aged hemlock. The Catskills protect animals that you might fancy a trip to Hudson's Bay would scarcely reveal. I have been told that even the pine marten is still caught there yearly. In fact, the Catskills, one hundred miles from New York City, can satisfy more outdoor aspirations than the ordinary aspirer can aspire to. It takes a very complete nature-lover to cover the Catskills and wish for more. Go to the Catskills and go crazy—that is, if you are at all susceptible to the crowding interests of nature at her wealthiest. And if you have never gone in winter, go then.

Without winter our race would never have ac-

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quired thrift or the strong fiber of reliance which that season, throwing a man back upon his slender resources, gives. Winter in the northern woods inculcates thrift and stanchness of relation. There can be no hit-or-miss about life where the next day may snow you up for the winter. There can be no extravagances with one's store of resources, either material or spiritual, when one is at bay before abysmal cold and the outer darkness of long nights.

On the other hand, if the year is stripped for the great fight, and if the lighter friends have blown to sunnier lands, there is recompense awaiting you. The skies were never more beautiful, the few birds never cheerier, and the circle round the hearth has time now to know you and be known.

It is the winter birds that appreciate the slender store of life. There are three who will be good company for you on a snowshoe walk. The nuthatches are a busy crowd. Head down and sometimes clinging to the under side of limbs, they ransack poplars and spruces. They have a squeaky little cry, and are too much engaged to pay you attention, and so you can keep along with them. Have an eye out for the red-breasted nuthatch. He is rarer than the white-breasted. With them the little downy woodpecker will be seen, trying hard, poor chap, to keep the pace, and consequently losing in thoroughness. He

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can't do half a tree to the nuthatch's one, but he doesn't let it worry him. The spot of flame at the back of his head gives just the spark of fancy needed in the somber forest. Occasionally one may see the rarer hairy woodpecker, a bigger cousin and rather taciturn.

The chickadee completes the usual trio, and I like him best of all. He is known by his black cap. He is never well groomed, like the snow-bird, and looks as if he had just been roughing life in his back woods; but he has a warmer heart than the snow-bird, and is found in just the places where you need somebody like him for companionship. Go up Slide or Windham or Hunter on one of those brilliant winter days when there is nothing around but the universe, and you will be thankful for the honest little chickadee.

The crow will not be friends with me. Indeed, I cannot say that I know a single crow intimately. There are lots of other birds that one doesn't expect to be familiar with. A warbler is, at best, a foreigner with a letter of introduction. A buzzard is of a class that one does not receive. A hawk is a free-booter. An eagle is His Majesty, before whom you should not presume to more than bow. But the crow is my neighbor, and I rather resent his aloofness. I like his voice on October evenings, and I like the glitter of his wings in March. But his nonchalant way of flying slowly

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off when I come over the hill is the cut direct. He has a sense of humor, or is dumber than I thought. The other day I saw him chase his own shadow as a cat its tail. He was flying over a sloping meadow of bronzed grasses. Three times he swooped, and each time his shadow joined him as he struck the grass. Whether it was his shadow that he was after, or merely a mouse, I can't say. But why three times?

Then, there are two friends of winter that I call my wood-pile birds. The blue-jay always comes around to see what is doing when I get out the ax. He is very curious, but will never quite admit it. He skulks around, and works up considerable indignation if there is no notice taken. But, for all his apparent temper and harsh scolding, he is enjoying it. He likes to be about and to be admired, and, as he is a fine sight between logs, we are both suited. When the cardinal comes round, I am content. The cardinal is something to give thanks for. In spring, when his song attains a haunting richness of tone, he is as perfect as a courtier can be. The song is but a sweet whistle, a prelude—to what? Ah! that is his secret—and yours. He starts the melody. You are a poor lover if your heart cannot go on with it.

All bird songs are like that. They all start something that they will not finish. The purple

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Photograph by William F. Kriebel

THE WINTER WOODS

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THE WITTENBERG

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finch, warbling so exquisitely from the new-green poplars, even the hermit-thrush beginning his divine arpeggios in the shadowy valley, cannot satisfy the rapture they inspire. It takes all of spring to round out the orb of the meadow-lark's first song. So blame not the cardinal if he but set the key.

The junco, whose snow-white tail feathers cheer you like a chance "hello," is the chummiest of all the winter friends. But he does n't tell you much. Just a *chip, chip* and a flirt of the tail. He is always trig, always trusting, and often the only scrap of life left in a snow-drowned world.

Sometimes a cedar-waxwing, the aristocrat beside whom the cardinal is a dowdy, sits on a bush and watches me work in my flannel shirt. I know that I am quite out of place in his society. He often whispers to his mate about me. But none of it ever reaches my ears. They are the quietest of birds. Exquisitely groomed and crested, the two will sit on a juniper bush and eat the berries, but genteelly and without haste, as though eating were beneath them. Never have I seen a waxwing disheveled, crowded, angry, or in danger. They are above enemies, one would infer from their manner. If they die at the hands of owls, I doubt not that they feel contempt to the end for their vulgar foe. They allow you to approach with ease near enough to see the yellow band

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across the tail and the wax tips of their wing-quills.

There are a number of other winter birds in the Catskills—the tufted titmouse and the winter wren and the golden-crowned kinglet and the hawks and owls, shrikes, pine siskins, redpolls, crossbills, buntings, wandering sparrows,—the eagle, who, soaring, seems to cover a county in each circle,—there are lots of birds that these winter woods, which seem so barren of all life, disclose.

Also, there are a great many animals—how many nobody can ever guess with a very near approach to accuracy. Varying in numbers, changing their range, sometimes hibernating, sometimes hiding with their young, a walker cannot even presuppose what he is to see. That gives a spice to rambles, and strings unexpected pleasures upon a day's jaunt as close as swallows on a wire.

Winter is the time to find friends among the animals. In spring they are busy with their children, and in autumn with their mates. In summer food is plenty, and they lie snug. In winter they must be abroad, all except the seven sleepers and the few who can live on their stores; and to be abroad in winter means to leave one's tale behind one.

The Catskill forest is a capacious storehouse of beechnuts and forage, and the meadows are alive

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with mice. This combination enables a veritable menagerie to live easily and in unexpected numbers. Take your snowshoes and wander back into the Peekamose country, or tramp and camp in the wild tangles of the upper Bushkill, and you will hear and read in the snow more woodland gossip than you 'd have dared suspect.

The impression one gets from the snow is that the forest is a parade-ground. Between storms the squirrels have time to visit every tree, the deer to do intricate patterns by the mile, the foxes to trot to all the interesting places, and the snowshoe rabbits to fill in the intervening spaces with hop, skip, and jump. Yet how many do you see in a day's walk? One squirrel, no deer, no fox, no rabbit. But take heart. That 's the first day. On the second your eyes are wider open. In a week—well, I shall not prophesy, for a good deal depends on whether you last out a week. But there are at least twenty animals that you may have seen.

In the Catskills the squirrel crowd is well represented, and, for a beginning, pays as well to follow up as any. In fact, to watch any animal is to become interested. The one watched becomes the most interesting in the world. A red squirrel at hand outweighs a rhinoceros somewhere else.

Along the road that I had to travel frequently

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there lived three red squirrel families in the space of a mile. It was a sort of squirrel parkway. Several times a day the little fellow who sits in the shadow of his tail would scamper by me, always using the same aërial route. It was a strange route, as jagged as the sky-line of the Rockies—up a big locust, down by a cedar, and jump. In some lights the sun shone warm on his back, which was the color of Barbarossa's beard. His home was in a woodpecker's hole—a lately ousted woodpecker, if the feathers meant anything. How the youngsters are trained to all the leaps and dashings that every young squirrel should know is a marvel I have not yet seen through. It is worth a summer to follow their fortunes from start to finish.

The finish comes not by broken leg so often as by weasel or by hawk. A red squirrel lives for five or six years, and there are only four reasons why he can escape without a fracture for every bone in his body: the length of his fur, his tail, his spread of limb, which makes for an almost spiritual lightness, and his agility, which is worthy of an Ariel.

There is some fun observing the red squirrel, because he never roams far, does not hibernate, is always into something, and will parley with you—at least, while the food lasts. He is about a foot long, half of it tail. He stores his food. He does

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not migrate. The family comes in May. His food consists of seeds, nuts, berries, and birds' eggs. He lives in fear of hawks and owls, but you 'd never know it.

Many men in the Catskills told me that the gray squirrel was plentiful, but I saw very few. It is common knowledge that the red squirrel, who despises and bullies the gray, always wins in disputes for territory. I found the reds everywhere, and am quite ready to draw the private conclusion that the lumbering, improvident, and cowardly gray is already fairly scarce, and becoming scarcer.

The chipmunk flourishes, and for those of us who do not demand wolves and mountain lions to whet our appetites little Tam will furnish amusement. There is sure to be a stone-pile, a woody ledge, a labyrinth of brambles near your house, and almost as sure to be a chipmunk there. Every clear day I sat at work, backed up to a pine, with needles for cushions and chipmunks for company. The vestibule to the chipmunkery was under a fallen spruce, and a dozen times an hour the elder chip would come out of his hole, survey the scene, scamper along the logs or over my legs, and fall to storing tree-seeds in his cheek-pouches. In the course of the entire summer never once did he neglect to look over the scene before leaving his hole, never once bounce right out and trust to luck that I would n't eat him. That particular family

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must have lived very well the next spring, when the hunger-hour struck. Among other things, they had stored about a pound of chocolate caramels, which I did n't intend them to have. I wonder if the youngsters were given one if they were good?

A chipmunk is about six inches long, with three more for tail, and is known by his stripes. He is not supposed to climb, but those caramels were on a six-foot shelf, reached via a higher roof, a ledge, and a window. Did the ground hackee smell them? Was he on a general exploring expedition? Does he usually explore so high? And how did he make the shelf? I would like to have stayed through the fall. When did Dad Hackee go to sleep? For how long? Did he help with the children's education?

Curiosity may kill the cat, but it creates the other beasts for us. Of course, ground hackees are small deer for ponderous intellects. Yet Burns was not above writing about a louse, and who will set himself above Burns? If you will lay aside your newspaper, sir, or your knitting, madam, and make the acquaintance of Tamias Striatus, if you will put some intimate questions to him, you will find that you know almost nothing about this animal within your gates. He will be as remunerative of interest as a fond gazelle. Keep a journal for Tammy, a camera set, some

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food at hand. It need not necessarily be chocolate caramels.

Perhaps I exaggerate, but some days it seemed to me that there must be a woodchuck for every native of the Catskills. They were not only bobbing in and out of their holes in the fields; they were also continually dodging back into roadside weeds, turning on wood trails and sneaking off, or coughing at me from behind rocks. The farmers, whose fields they are forever turning into animated subways, hate them. They are shot, trapped, poisoned, and probably ferreted. They flourish. Other animals, as Thompson Seton says, all die before their time. But the woodchuck sees his out, living in clover in the summer and in his own-steam-heated apartment in the winter, fat, idle, lazy, aldermanic, a fit survivor of Diedrich Knickerbocker's race.

There are some questions I would have you discover the answers to, since I can find no facts and cannot bring my wits to conjure fit reasons for. How does this beast, who never exercises, remain so surprisingly agile that he can turn his two feet of puddin'-bag flesh in his hole fifteen times a quarter of an hour? How does he survive the fox, who is as a town lawyer to this country priest? How does he maintain himself in the midst of a circumambient hate? How does he get enough liquid from the dew (for he does not drink water)

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to placate the demands of his physiology, particularly since his idea of a saturnalia is to lie out by the day in the torrid sun?

After watching a woodchuck through an opera-glass for an hour or so, stowing clover, one gets new standards of gluttony. In the fall he eats by the day. Clearly the future of man is not along the alimentary canal. We have come that way. Everything that can be accomplished by eating has been tried by the ostrich, the bear, and the woodchuck. He is the vegetarian's best example. He is also the original sun-worshiper. The Old Man of the Pasture preaches to over-busy people in terms of success. He continues to inherit the earth. His mood is perpetual patience, his song a monody of ecstatic sloth. If you wish for perfect content, you must pray to be a woodchuck.

It was not quite characteristic that I should have come on my fox in the way in which I did—rounding a corner of the wood path and finding him playing with a broken weed. He was a bit astonished, and yet disdained to appear excited, trotting down the trail several yards before jumping into the bushes. Yet I cannot believe that I surprised him. One does not surprise foxes.

Foxes must eat, in winter particularly, and, as they are not supernaturally borne over snow, they must leave a track, a single line of little pads. It is not only possible to read the continued story; it

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is quite possible to have a hand in it yourself. I know a family of five brothers, long-winded and long-legged, who, after familiarizing themselves with Reynard's usual run, set out to trail him down in relays. As twenty-five miles is a fair run for a fox, and as they are good for forty, they sometimes get the red ones. The gray take too soon to cover. For any set of athletes it is a magnificent game, in which every minute pays its share of the pleasure.

Both gray and red foxes are found in the Catskills. The grays seem to be driving out the reds, and are destroying the ruffled grouse. I have never seen the young of the gray, but the sight of the tawny cubs of the red playing together is a sight that a man will never forget. The spotted faun, surprised in the deep wood, and leaping away into almost instant invisibility, is possibly the supreme vision of the wild-wood. But baby foxes, with their soft fur running through every change of gold and yellow-brown, white-throated and big-headed, are more playful than Puck's children, and an entrancing sight.

The fox loves the border-lands best. He lives on meadow-mice and his neighbor's fowls, or rather on those of his neighbor but one. He is said to spare the nearest farm for strategy's sake. I don't know how true this is.

Also the cottontail is most content when near

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civilization. She sits in her own form by day, but in some one else's garden by night, and is ready to incur the ranging dog rather than have to travel too far for her cabbage.

On the contrary, her cousin, the varying hare,—the white rabbit of the vernacular, but the snowshoe rabbit of the naturalist,—prefers the willow swamp and the copsy highlands of serener woods. Certainly there is no more interesting place in which to have a Catskill cabin than up one of those valleys such as Big Injin or the Beaverkill, where, just within the fringe of hemlocks, one gets the best of both environments. At one's back door lies the shadowy hinterland of forest and invisible beasts; at one's front the open hill and dale, peopled with a more metropolitan menagerie. Eitherwhere live multitudes, unseen and unsuspected. But, if you choose well, you can share the fortunes of those who fancy darkness as well as of those who love the light.

The snowshoe rabbit is recognized by his very long ears, his hind legs that crook up in the back because they are so long, his rusty brown of summer and his pure white coat in winter, and—most interesting of all—his moult in the autumn and spring. In the autumn the change to white begins with his feet, the patches widening upward from the legs and back from the ears. In the spring the order is reversed.

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Brute and I found evidences of these hares on every snowy summit that we mounted. They had scampered across wide open spaces, though loving the thickets most. Their broad pads lifted them fairly well in the light snow, and very well when it had hardened a little. The few we watched did not seem to be very hungry, although the vernal appetite is much the keenest. Six-foot leaps on the mountain-tops were not unusual, but the ones we scared did not seem in any hurry to leave. Whether they play in the moonlight, as some naturalists announce, we could not tell. Certainly none came to act before us that night on Huntersfield. But, from the maze of tracks on Slide, I should judge that they held regular nightly hops, moon or no moon.

A great deal could be done with a note-book on Slide. The largest leaps could be measured, the shrubs examined to discover their larders, the earliest appearance after the big snows determined, their places of concealment during snows found, the normal range estimated, and the years of frequency counted. When all this data had been collected, it could be compared with Ernest Thompson Seton's authoritative work in "Life Histories of Northern Mammals," the most fascinating narrative of animal existence that I have had the luck to fall upon. Mr. Seton is popularly supposed to fashion the straight line of veracity

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into an artistic halo for his animals; but in this thousand-page master-work every authority is cited, every rumor credited as such. To be sure, there is the glamour of personality throughout the two volumes, the adjective that brings a smile, the fancy that enhances the fact. The facts, however, are there, quite undiluted with fancy. The result is that people who would turn away from museum reports turn to these biographies, and when the book is closed return to the woods and fields with a tremendous appetite aroused.

There is sure to be a porcupine living within a mile of your Catskill cottage. Some night he will smell salt, a smell more alluring to him than blood to a hungry tiger. If you give him time, he will gnaw down the house about your ears for that grain of salt. He will not, however, shoot his quills at you. Nor can he escape you running: So chase him up a tree, tie a white towel about it, and let him wait till morning. If it be a hemlock, he will begin on his next meal right away. He is an irritable beast, and as unsociable as a woodchuck. Porcupines chatter in a shrill, teeth-gritting way when they are disturbed. Do not appeal to their reason. They have none. Yet do not trust their quiescence. That tail will slap like a camera-shutter, leaving you with the appearance and feeling of a pin-cushion. The quills have to be cut out, being barbed, and are the quint-

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essence of *schrecklichkeit* in a brutish world. Whatever becomes of the porcupine in winter, he neither sleeps nor obtrudes his society. I do not know his trail. Occasionally a dog finds him, and sometimes a flesh-eater, crazed with hunger, tries the untriable and gets crazed with something else. Probably he stays up in his thick hemlock until it is stripped, only to make the short trip to another.

While I was in Roxbury they were having a crusade against skunks. Skunks are fond of chicken in any form, and these, recently emerged from their long denning up, were bent on having some eggs at any price. It was an unfortunate bargain for them.

A skunk is guessed by his stripe and taken for granted by his tail. The sensible man trusts to his senses. Yet, according to all authorities, the skunk is not easily irritated to action, and even when he feels his temper rising he gives ample warning to the neighbors by delicately turning his back and raising his tail. If the tail should spread and the tip rise, then let the beholder exert himself and flee. Ten feet is scarcely a safe distance, and the smell is strong for miles.

Skunks seem to know that security is their due. They are as likely to nest beneath a back porch as to seek seclusion in the edge of wood or swamp. Study of the skunk vouchsafes all the excitement

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of a lion hunt. Yet the results are not so permanent. Just bury the clothes in the wood.

In hollow Catskill beeches breeds the coon. You can't mistake the little bear with his big ringed tail and black cheek patches. There is enough fish and enough green corn in the Catskill country to make his summers bright, and he sleeps through the worst of winter, so his five-toed track is not the one you 're thinking of.

Neither is it in the pine marten's, who lives in the trees, who prefers the heaviest of fir forests to the open woods, and who will have nothing of the border-lands. He is a big weasel with a big spot of yellow on his brown throat.

Neither is it the otter's, for all unite in saying that the otter is no longer found in the Catskills.

Neither is it the fisher's who never lived there—in any number, at least.

Nor the wolverine's, who plagues Canadian but not Catskill trappers.

Nor the beaver's, who has been liberated on some of the western Catskill streams, but is not yet thoroughly established.

But it is the mink's, who wanders by the ponds here and there in the western Catskills and along some of the wilder streams. He can be seen gliding or sometimes swimming, but never still. He is a black beauty, more graceful than the grayish 'chuck, and less ratty than the muskrat, without

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the stripe and flaring tail of the skunk, and easily distinguishable from the opossum with his rat tail, or the coon with its prisoner pattern.

There are fairies, too, as reward for the diligent searcher. Tucked away in the recesses of the Catskill glens live the flying squirrels, and the weasel who turns white in winter, the big hoary bat, and a host of shrews. The little brown bat comes down to the villages; and where you pitch your tent you will entertain the most beautiful animal in the world, the jumping mouse, with his exquisite white feet and plumy tail. There are other mice, and a mole or two, and along the snow the muskrat drags his tail behind him, as meek as Mary's lamb—unless disturbed.

There used to be forty-five kinds of mammals in the Catskills. Gone forever are the gray wolf, the elk, the panther, the Canada lynx, and the otter. The forty others are still there. Deer are plentiful, bear common, and wild-cats are killed each winter, sometimes a dozen, sometimes but half a dozen in the three counties, if one may estimate from hearsay.

The wild-cat is undoubtedly the most interesting animal left. In early summer, if you listen, you will hear the shivery bark of the barred owl, which is sufficiently awing; but far away (yet not too far for creepiness) you may hear the rasping caterwauling of two cats. The Canada lynx in-

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sists upon deep woods, but the wild-cat—which is the bay lynx and differs only from the Canadian in size and ability—will range close to farms, hide in wood-lots, and supplement his dietary of chipmunks, rabbits, and grouse, with poultry.

It is a perfectly safe winter sport to trail the wild-cat, if you can. There is no record yet of any Catskill denizen having attacked a man, or a woman either, for that matter. The bear sees you first and takes to the next county. The deer, which is the most treacherous of all animals in captivity, will spare no pains to eliminate herself from your presence. The wild-cat is so beautifully agile in matted branches and along fallen trees that he invisibly escapes the silence-smashing man who is crashing toward him on two awkward legs. Indeed, the only animal to be feared in the woods is the porcupine, who, by chance, may come up and lick your hand in the dark. The muskrat has been known to attack in numbers, and in the dim of dusk mosquitos have been heard; but the wide-wood, for all of them, is freer of danger than one city street.

It is easy to take the little animals for granted. The difficulty is in believing in bears. When we came upon 'Gene Kerr working in his garden, his rifle leaning against the house and a row of bear skulls grinning along the side of the barn, we had to believe. Later, when we had shredded our

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Photograph by J. G. Leipold

LATE OF WITTENBERG FOREST

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ASHOKAN FROM THE WITTENBERG

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clothes in brier patches, roamed over thousands of square miles of blueberry desert (or so it seemed in the sun), and spent the night in the deep darkness of the Catskill forest, we began to doubt. And after we had poked in perfect dens and descended into marvelous bear havens, we began to resent the stupidity of bears in not making use of the facilities offered.

A bear is difficult to see. Since he does n't hee-haw, or bark, or sing in one's ear, he has no way of drawing your attention. Also, being very shy, he will not stay in a place until you run into him. His notion of life in the spring is to beget and then get. In the fall his daily round is designed to make him daily rounder. And in the winter he sleeps it off. In January, in order to give birth to her young, the mother has to wake. This makes her crosser than a bear naturally is. It does seem unjust. She maintains her ill humor by not eating or drinking for several months, being still denned up. All this time her two cubs are developing from squirrel-size infants into creatures dog-like, then boy-like, then bear-like, until they are able to wander around the woods and begin to feed on adult provender, which is nearly everything swallowable from bugs and berries up to beetles and small deer.

Owing to the excessive timidity of bears, Brute and I have had to take all the above information

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from trappers and talkers of their ilk. I have seen their hides, their skulls, their slayers, and their photographs; and, putting two and two together, I am prepared to assert that there are a good many yet in the Catskill country. That they have no inhumane intention toward human beings I can even more confidently assert. I have given them every chance.

The deer, in comparison with the bears, behave in a way that is positively forward. Instead of running deftly away like a three-hundred-pound bear, they will break twigs, stamp, turn, and snort from behind bushes. It is n't sensible, but it gives one beautiful glimpses of tawny grace, of matchless poise, which are fixed in the imagination forever. It is far harder to get a good view of a deer in the Catskills than in the Adirondacks. They are relatively fewer, shyer, and less accessible. In the Catskills there are so few open ponds and so few marshy meadows that one must wait long, walk far, or be in the uplands much to get one's fill of their white-tailed vanishings. Patience will be rewarded, however, as always, and in the snow can be read the long story of their existence.

I have spoken of the winter woods as if their branches were thick with birds and their shrubbery trodden down by a crowding mass of animals. That comes from letting the results of many wanderings jostle each other in the corral of the

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printed page. To the hurried visitor the Catskills will seem birdless and creatureless. It is for him who roams the woods alone and without regard to time-pieces—this revelation of almost spirit-like life that lives in the shadows.

The woods, however, are there. They cannot slink back into hidden dens. They are the life-ground of innumerable activities, the great theater of all outdoors, and the most beautiful theater imaginable. Even if you care nothing for the fascinating skunk and have never heard of the relentless ermine, you cannot remain obdurate to the charm of the stage on which they live out their little rôles as comedian and villain. If you once wander back into the winding aisles where the hemlock droops with snow and the brook has built itself music-rooms of marble, you will never shake yourself quite free of the spell. You will always see something more than dark trunks and the vistas of white. You will feel the imminence of something wonderful to happen. Somehow, a new blessing falls upon you. Life falls into proportion. The delight of going on no longer intrudes upon the pleasure of staying still. And so, in the winter woods, you find a novel peace.

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CHAPTER XIV

THE NORTHWEST REDOUBT

WHEN Manitou planned his great fortress, now known as the Catskills, he built the long battlement on the east to parallel the Hudson, arranged the labyrinthine masses of intersecting range in the south for Great Headquarters, designed a wilderness of pond and forest on the southwest and raised a great redoubt, now called Mount Utsayantha, on the northwest as a lookout toward the Great Lakes, whence were to come the predatory spirits.

Utsayantha is 3,365 feet high, and from its summit one is able to see spirits a good way off. To the north the first ranges of Adirondacks were plainly visible on the breezeless morning that adorned the world when Brute and I invested this redoubt of Manitou. To the west shone the long country that we were not to visit. The view looked over low hills and far away to Otsego Lake, where Cooper lived. To the east and south rose the Mountains of the Sky, the Onti Ora.

Before I visited the Catskills I considered that the Indians were singularly proud or misin-

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formed to call their petty mounds the Mountains of the Sky. *Pff!* Mountains of the Sky! And what, then, were the Rockies? Mountains of the Seventh Heaven? And when one got to heaven? Borrowing trouble, perhaps. However, the Onti Ora seemed an uncalled-for pretension—until I visited the Catskills. Then I understood. Mountains of the Sky is the most beautiful and fit name for the refuge of Manitou. The Indians did not mean the high sky, the empty and interminable blue. They meant the low, rich, all-brooding heaven that settles in between the ranges with its wash of gentian shades. They meant the cloud-heaps of pearl or ivory that west winds set adrift from their moorings in these mountains.

That day on Utsayantha was a reward to Brute and me for indulging in living. A streak of laziness is a dangerous thing, but it is mighty pleasant. How often it wards off a lot of unprofitable exertion! Who is to say whether loafing for a whole day on a sunny mountain-top is laziness or life? And, whatever the verdict, the day was a distinct tribute to our intention. From cloudless morning to cloud-heaped noon, through gathering afternoon to gust-swept evening, we watched the pageant of day file across the lands.

At the foot of Utsayantha lies the wide-streeted, white-painted provincial town of Stamford. Beyond it, dale after dale supplies milk to the down-

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State cities, and should supply all the fragrant traditions of herdsmen and cattle-keepers to sweeten our toiling times. In such a lovely landscape one felt that men might be milder-mannered than those who infest the rocky fastnesses of cities or the equally callous wilderness. In such a place, if anywhere, should flourish generosity and genuineness, a little deeper humanity. Yet, in conversation with one of the citizens, Brute and I heard a tale of the countryside such as one of the world's best misers would have blushed to better. We began to investigate a thing or two, and found that the people of these homelike valleys were scarcely different from other people. If they were no worse, they also were no better. Environment does not seem to warp morality for good or ill. The tree may grow as the twig is inclined; but there seems to be a very similar average of inclinations everywhere.

That evening we let ourselves down into Stamford, the first town of airs that we had penetrated since our clothes had begun to look strained and overworked. What the Stamfordians thought of our appearance cannot be related, for they never said. Nor could we care overmuch. Twenty miles a day is a narcotic to the pride, and much wayfaring, I can see, would bring on a social revolution—at least, as far as dressing for dinner. How ridiculous our ancestors have been! Kings

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and nobles plotting and competing to live in marble halls—unheated. Men slaving to amass gold and jewels, when what they really wanted was a hot bath. A throne, a scepter, and five necklaces of rubies would not have seemed so good to us that night as did two turkish towels. We arrived clad in mud and slush. We left clothed in our right minds. Yet the only joys that had enriched the interval between were never catalogued among the pleasures of emperors. Simplified civilization is the height of luxury.

However ingratiating was our stay in Stamford, we felt as do those campers who make a foray into a city for supplies. They arrive with a superior air. They depart with an apology for tarrying. It is as if they had demeaned themselves to the extent of the necessary moments in a man-made place. However pleasant it felt to be natty, Brute and I were both for betaking ourselves to the wild-wood again, despite its affronts to our haberdashery.

The sensation of taking the road again is very like that of coming out of a theater into the sunlight after a tedious matinée. All the tiresome unrealities of a wrought-up afternoon are soothed by the slanting sunlight. So did we issue from the uncomplacent porters and the call of hackmen into a countryside beaming with a sun that did not seem to have risen merely for the sake of the morn-

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ing papers. The snow was gone on the levels, and the undercurrents of green, which for some days had been running up the brook-banks, began to show as a verdant torrent on the lea of southern hills.

At Grand Gorge there are three directions that call with equal shrillness. To the northeast is Gilboa, where the new reservoir is being made. To the southeast runs the road to Devasego Falls, Prattsville, and Red Falls. To the south you go through another clove and approach Roxbury, delightful town.

The two falls are worth a visit in season. Red Falls, where the steppy ledge breaks up the thread of water, runs like a melody of Schubert, clear, sparkling, beautiful—an eternal melody with variations. Devasego, on the other hand, particularly in the spring, is like Wagner going symphonically to pieces, Rhine maidens and all. And, as often happens, there are many secondary falls of unsung beauty nearby which are recommended to those whose tribulations are lightened by the sight of falling water.

Prattsville was settled by one Colonel, a tanner. Not content with the limited immortality of leather, the Colonel hired him a sculptor to imbust him on a cliff. To make assurance triply sure, he had his horse and dog done also. The inquiring tourist is always directed to Pratt's Rocks

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by the wide-eyed native to see the imperishable features of the great man (and his great horse and dog) on the old Devonian rock—a lesson to all tanners of ambition. The trip out there is quite worth while—but to see the mark of the old sea-currents channeled on the cliff.

There is also another record of unrecorded time that the praters about Pratt forget to mention. Beyond Prospect Hill flows a brook called Fly, which any good Dutchman knows was meant for Vly, a swamp. The Fly rises in a glacial lake. Mr. J. Lynn Rich of Ithaca can prove it. The terminal moraine is there, too. Mr. Rich says that the glacial marks point to a movement different from the usual movement of glaciers in other regions. Catskill valleys were not much enlarged by the Ice Age. Therefore there was n't much destruction of their sides or bottoms, not much detritus, hence few moraines, and so we miss the picture-gallery lakes that so enhance the beauty of the Adirondacks.

From Lexington to Shandaken is a road, a little more than ten miles long, that fits into its bed between high hills, and rests there with all the contentment of perfection. A stiff grade south of Westkill brings you to a summit of the pass, and to a charming lake where we saw a mink. In spring the road is bordered with woodchucks and decorated with nesting birds. In winter it is very

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lonely, and the glimpses of ranges afar off shine with a remoteness accentuated by the shadows of the ravine. In summer these same views take on a more neighborly appearance that make the Westkill Notch a favorite with even the casual motorist whose engine is not getting too hot.

It was later that we took the walk which stamped this valley with its completest charm for us—a walk that every lover of woods, the easy woods, should know. We had left Hunter in a morning fog that lifted soon into soft clouds, which, entirely pleased with earth, hung not so far above the hills. A mile west of Hunter on the State road, an iron bridge takes you across the Schoharie, and a little road quickly brings you to the woods that cover the range. Up and up through the thick cover goes the little grass-grown road. For an hour you mount steadily, come out on a shaly top, descend a little, and suddenly emerge on the view of the Westkill Valley. If a camera could catch the impossible, then Brute's picture might show to you the atmospheric necromancy of our surprise. A cloud was leaving its mother-dale forever. A range of mountains athwart the west softened in the light of mid-morning. The valley ran below us, disappearing behind mountain shoulders, reappearing where the brook had widened its tenure in the course of centuries. Southward rose the Big Westkill, stern in its own

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shadow, and still topped with cloud. Of all the scenes that fill one's years of memories, those are favorite that have come as surprise. We give Niagara its due, and are speechless beneath the Wetterhorn; but the minor personal discoveries—a night of desert moonlight, some wood in Nova Scotia, a charming picture in an unmentioned nook—these cling, and to them the memory has recourse when it least expects. Should I tell you to see the Westkill Valley you might be disappointed. Should you come upon it as we did, you will wonder why everybody does not go that way. Indeed, the entire Catskill region is susceptible to the dangers of expectation. There have been no strokes of geologic lightning to rend it into stupefying gulfs. All is blended, suave. It is meant for those who will look twice.

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CHAPTER XV

BIG INJIN AND HEAP BIG SLIDE

DAME NATURE—like other dames—prefers not to wear the same costume twice. Brute and I saw enough valleys to convince us that the world was one vast gutter. Up glens, down ravines, along valleys did we traipse, pack-a-back, by day and by night, until we wondered how the region got to be called the Catskill Mountains. Mountains rose here and there, but the valleys were one continuous performance. The mountains rose merely to oblige the valleys, to bring them into relief, and in return the valleys led one insinuatingly into the mountains. How insinuatingly one could never guess until he came to the mouth of one and looked up. It was impossible to refuse the invitation—and always worded differently. For all their hundreds, we never saw two valleys alike. Dame Nature is the high priestess of versatility.

Shandaken is the village at the mouth of the Westkill Clove, and half way between the entrances to the Woodland and Big Injin valleys,

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the two ways of approach to Slide Mountain. We chose Big Injin—named for a strapping redskin who got into trouble because he would murder people. The name, of course, has been banalized into Big Indian, just as in the Adirondacks we prefer to call the good and significant Tahawus Mt. Marcy. We shall continue to Germanize our imaginations until they starve to death, probably, or until somebody has the power to show us that there is a good deal in a name. Why hotel men, to mention just one class, should continue to propagate Hill Crests and Belle Vues by the hundreds, when they can make money out of names of distinction, is a conundrum that does not appeal to one proud of American wits.

Big Injin Valley begins with a curve that shuts it from the workaday world of road and rail. Having once wrapped itself satisfactorily in its air of seclusion, it starts off upon its mission of leading back into the heart of the wild country. The afternoon was as balmy as deceptive spring knows how to be. A wind, as tender as the bleat of a new-born lamb, played down the little side glens and whispered in the trees, until one was ready to believe its tale about summer being on the way. The stream curved from one side of the valley-bottom to the other, always clear, always rushing. Big Injin is the birth-dale of the Esopus, which conjures to my mind pictures equal in charm

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to those brought back by the mention of the Rondout, the Neversink, and the Schoharie.

We rounded curve after curve on the mounting road, always to find some charming slope ahead or some group of little hemlocks meeting together. Always there was some glimpse of the creek hurrying around the corner. Instead of the Mountains of the Sky, the Indians might have called the country the Land of Little Rivers, for down each glen sprang some brook to join the bright Esopus. Brute and I could not help exclaiming about their beauty, so intangible, so unpicturable.

It is for its streams that the Catskills has a right to be ranked with the great family of American parks. Their volnme is not great compared to the waters of the Adirondacks or Canada, where the scale of things is beyond imagination. Neither is there unbroken forest large enough to earn the name of wilderness. The heart cannot leap as it does at the thought of the balsam-guarded glories of the Ausable and the Raquette, or the Abitibi and the Richelieu. But on a sunny afternoon in April, if you will go with me as I went with Brute, from glen to glen, each glittering with cascades, you will rejoice that New York City has such a wealth of beauty close at hand.

Half way up Big Injin is the little town of Oliverea, which the natives pronounce to rhyme with sea, and I don't see why they should n't. It

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boasts an engaging little schoolhouse, very white, with a yard, then already very green, on which three little boys were valiantly endeavoring to use a baseball bat—the three being the entire boy population of the town, I suppose. Brute knocked out a few to them while I was making inquiries as to the accommodations farther along. We were ingenuously assured, with no reference to the truth, that we could easily find lodging farther up the road, or at least the man at the Club would take us in. The Club, it seemed, was half way up Slide. This, promising an early start on the morrow, cheered our legs, which were beginning to groan with the addition of every rod.

Big Injin Valley widens out at the top into an upland bowl. The Esopus falls away and is heard no more. In summer the view over the rolling hillsides presents great distances of melting contours. When we saw it we were chiefly concerned with the declining sun. The swelling tide of spring had not yet inundated the encompassing circlet of fields that heads the cultivable vale. We had again reached the snow-level. From time to time we had seen the gray sides of Panther heaving forests against the sky, but we had seen no Slide. We knew he must be ahead of us, for the map said so and the natives confirmed the map. But, though we had actually been ascending him for two hours, we had had no glimpse. Slide sidles

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behind other peaks. For years he had lived unsuspected by his tenants. With a final good-by to open fields, the Esopus, Big Injin Valley, and daylight, we entered the woods, tired, wet, hungry, and apprehensive.

The Winnisook Club is an exclusive affair headquartered on a little lake part way up Slide, surrounded by forests, miles from food and bed. Its cottages are cared for by an affable man and his wife, who, by rule, are not supposed to take in tramps, no matter how hungry. Luckily, we did not know this. Why the inhabitant of Oliverea did not tell us the truth of the matter I cannot fathom, and I shall not repeat Brute's reason.

The entrance to the Club forest is impressive. The trees are tall, the road winding. On that night, in addition to the awe of darkening wood, we felt a vague misgiving as of coming misadventure. If the caretaker should not be in, if he should not have enough food, if he should decline to house us—these questionings came to our lips as the snow deepened and the steepness of the hill increased. "We can go *on*," said my legs to me, "but not an inch back."

How alternatives make cowards of us all! As long as there was a question of turning back and finding assured provender in distant Oliverea, or of plugging on and trusting to fortune, what a sickening seesaw our wills experienced! But

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Photograph by J. B. Allison

A Slope of Utsayantha

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SOUTH FROM UTSAYANTHA

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wnen we had gone so far that there was no more question of retreat, how gay we became! There is sorcery in such a situation. Brute is the sort of chap to come completely under the spell. Fortune has but to waver, and he is after her like a terrier after a rat. Let a scrape get really absurd, and he is elated with a species of raging joy. His pulse beats to the impossible. And we all love him for it. That was why it was such fun to travel with him. In the last analysis, it is a safe tendency, too; for those who can be divinely foolish can also be supremely sensible.

Despite Brute's occasional jests, I pulled myself up that slope with a hang-dog sinking of the nerve. It was so steep for tired muscles, so dark when there might be no light to greet us. The Club must keep stout horses. Presently we came upon a man's tracks. He had been chopping. I can remember the appearance of his handiwork yet—ash in fire-wood pieces, white as peppermint sticks. It made me savagely hungry.

At the last gasp of twilight and of my lamenting bellows, we reached the dammed pond on which the Club cottages look out. We tried several before we found the one inhabited by the caretaker. A very thin wisp of smoke came from the chimney. This was cheering. We knocked. No answer. Knocked again. No answer. This was not cheering. In that moment of waiting I real-

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ized how very tired I was. After the third knock we opened the door and walked in.

The kitchens of mountaineers are usually one extreme or another. They are filthy or very clean, a welter of incapacity or a brightness to the soul, a sty or a religion. This one was a religion. The black iron altar from which the incense arose had not been left overlong, for the wood coals were still hot. In one corner stood a table on which the gospel of good eating was thrice-daily preached. It was still set with the lesser tenets: a jug of maple syrup, a bottle of pickles, sugar. The pantry door was open, and no hart panted after the water-brooks more fervently than did our palates for the sustenance within. Yet in this inimitable paradise of plenty there was no inhabitant visible. The situation paralleled that of the original Garden in the week preceding Adam.

It was a delicate situation. Out West it is still entirely permissible to apply the golden rule. In the East the silver one has been adopted instead.

"Must we starve in sight of plenty?" I sighed.

"We 'll explain that we are n't ordinary housebreakers."

"Suppose they shoot us first and then inquire?"

"Why can't we pay in advance?"

"Before being shot, you mean?"

"I 'll stay with you," said Brute, with a sud-

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den air of finality, putting some wood into the stove at the same time.

"You certainly won't go with me," I replied, trying to assume the same tone.

"Where do you suppose they keep the bacon?" Thus we were committed.

While supper was advancing we thought of many plans. Both to sit up and welcome the returning host. One to sit up, the other to sleep, turn about. Both to go to bed, leaving a note. We had a simple but substantial meal, and we made out a scrupulous bill to ourselves, paying it to the table in dimes and quarters, a pile of them by the lamp. The clock-hands went round, but nobody appeared. The heat of the room, the soothing meal, the pleasant reaction from indecision to commitment, from fatigue to sleepiness, all made staying up a further impossibility.

"I 'll give this family ten minutes to come in and catch me awake. After that they can finish me off with a club and I 'll not say a word."

I yawned an unmannerly, exuberant yawn.

"It 's unreasonable," I muttered, "if they 're so finicky as to object to two, nice, pleasant, cultivated, amiable, and fatigued young—"

"Oh, cut it and give me a pencil."

I sleepily pitched Brute one, and he took a piece of paper,—the side of a breakfast-food box it was,—and printed:

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KINDLY DO NOT WAKEN
WE CAN PAY

The idea was a good one. I took the other side of the box and wrote:

PLEASE BE GENTLE. WE ARE
HARMLESS TOURISTS

Then, with the ends of the box, we made two placards and placed them beside the little piles of coin: FOOD—LODGING.

That done and our minds composed to sleep, there remained only the details of the exact location. We delicately reconnoitered the situation as far as it threw light on beds. Upstairs there were three rooms with a double bed each, and downstairs a crib, a couch, a window-seat, and an enormous arm-chair. It was a nice diplomacy that was required. How far could we trespass on the sanctity of the home and yet get a night's rest? The crib was out of the question, and I declined the arm-chair. We thought it wise to eliminate the upstairs beds. This left us the couch, the window-seat, and the floor.

We had just recovered from the last throes of debate and were partially prepared for window-seat and couch, when the kitchen door swung open, and in stepped a flannel-shirted gentleman, closely followed by a lady and two younger gentilities.

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I say gentleman and lady descriptively, instead of man and woman, which they undoubtedly were, because of the not inconsiderable poise with which they met the situation. My visualization of a gentleman is very nearly that of a man walking into his own house at the dead of night to find it commandeered by two strangers, and yet whose equanimity is still equal to the shock.

There was a moment of polite expectancy, the moment in a Western story when the hero's eye flashes fire just before his gun does. The two boys stared from behind their mother. Then Mr. Short said:

"Making yourselves to home, boys?"

So, after all, there was no ranting to heaven, nothing theatrical except the entrance. We soon were explained. They laughed at our signs, and Mrs. Short brought out some gingerbread which we had overlooked, and which made a delectable addendum to our meal (as paid for). The boys, who were at the hero stage, were all eyes on Brute, who sat winking like a sleepy young giant, with his shirt open at the throat, his sleeves still rolled up—he had washed the dishes—showing wondrous muscle, or so they thought. And as he said droll things they stared.

There is nothing so beautiful as a boy's admiration for strength. I doubt whether Brute realized his enshrinement. He talked against sleep

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because he felt that he owed them more than money. But it makes a scene I shall be long forgetting: the hospitable kitchen, the wide-eyed youngsters, and the guide listening as Brute told them about our night on Huntersfield. His feet were high on the wood-box; the good nature of him shone through his weariness. His dark, tously hair and dark eyes made the necessary shadow to the light of his smile.

At length—at great length, it seemed to me—we were shown to real sheets, and we slept—for a moment. The sun—which, like the reputed American zeal, cannot be kept down—rising, we did too, confused at the shortness of the night, but obedient to Mr. Short's summons. There is much virtue in cold water. A little cold water put the sun in its place. We descended as fresh as if there had been no yesterdays. Mrs. Short's breakfast was ambitious, trying to be dinner. We did justice to its aspirations. As the boys saw us off, they said:

"Reckon you fellows 'll be the first up Slide this season. Good luck."

People like that bring home the kindred of the world. In contrast to the apprehension with which we had approached the lonely little Club, we were going refreshed in body and reinforced in spirit. The earth, too, had been recreated by the night. Frost sparkled on everything. The

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air bit playfully. The universe shone as if it had just been turned out from a fresh lot of nebulæ. The snow was hard, and easy to walk on.

The route from the Club led along the road for a short way, then turned to the right and took to a trail. As the boys had warned us, there were no footprints, but the blazes were readable. The map was sufficient commentary. To our left the woods sloped uniformly up; on the right they fell into a ravine. Here and there the forest cover parted for a moment to let the eye rove over distances that were ever bluer and farther. It took about two hours to reach the top.

Unfortunately for the view in summer, Slide has no tower. There used to be one, but it has rotted. We felt our way to the highest point by following the old telephone wire that used to run to the tower. Even without that, it would not be very difficult to follow the spine of the horseback crest to the actual summit. For us it was very easy, as a digression to either side meant plunging into snow armpit deep. Rabbit tracks, deer tracks, even mouse and bird tracks, were common on the level top between the stunted conifers where the snow could not drift. Spring, which had been busy in Philadelphia for a full month, which had begun to run her green fingers through the woods of the valley below us, had never cast a look in

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Slide's direction. Except for the crust on the snow, which betokened some thaw, it might have been December on the ground. But not so in the air. The dazzle of a spring sun, a certain softness that would win yet from the hard heart of winter what was wanted, were all about. We reached the pile of stones supposed to be the apex of the ungainly mountain, and drew a deep breath. It had been without much effort, and, in the world of morals, should be without much reward. But there is some comfort for sinners in knowing that Nature gets along without morality. I have undergone every torture under heaven in trying to reach some peak, and had little for my pains. Again, I have strolled out upon some ledge and had the world at my feet. There is no morality in Nature. But there is so much intelligence required to keep up with her that it is easier to follow the trails that we call morals than to blaze new ways to the selfsame peaks. Quite without questioning as to whether we had earned the view, we sat down on a near-by projection and began to absorb it.

It was still early morning. There was no stir of air. The influences of Nature were exactly counter-poised. Even the immense billows of mountains seemed just forever halted. Snow glitter answered back to sun, east to west, range in response to valley. It was impossible to realize

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that this whole accurately balanced contrivance was revolving at frenzied speed—hard to realize even that there were breezes in the valley and tides in the sea. Peace and calm beyond the senses to feel closed about us.

Views from the tops of mountains are among the most unsatisfying things that human beings toil to attain, and the higher the more unsatisfying. Lesser mountains immediately become despicable. The reach of sky, ordinarily big enough, one would think, expands to inconceivable and useless proportions. Instead of looking at the colored mosses at one's feet, which could be understood, one gazes into a vague wash of sentiment that leaves no effect on the memory. The wind usually precludes comfort. The home-going must soon be considered. As a waste of foot pounds of energy, mountaineering is nearly one hundred per cent. thorough. But as a bath to the spirit it is an efficient promoter of soul-health.

The easiest view from Slide is obtained from that projection on the east. We sat for a long while, watching the long ribbon of the Ashokan and the faint mists of morning lying in the troughs of the mountain-rollers. To the northeast rose terrace after terrace of the northern Catskills, tinged with a faint, coppery blue. Then we changed over to the west, and looked down into wooded valleys where the morning was still young.

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On the north side we looked over into the extraordinary gulf from which the mountain drew its name, part of the brow having yielded to the call of gravity and slipped to the base.

Early in the morning the three hundred miles of horizon visible from Slide paint a color picture to which one's sensibilities, keyed by the height, respond with pleasure. There are greens and blues, browns and oranges, violets and purples, yellow whites and innumerable gradations of unnamable tints. Sunset is a wide shimmer of color deepening from the east to west. Moonlight makes the valleys luminous with grays and velvet blacks. At noon the vales are in a stupor of light; at midnight they are lost in a dream of darkness over-watched by such a multitude of stars that there come new impressions of the Divine Authority. Slide is hard to reach, hard to see from, is remote and lonely; but in spring or summer, in snow-time or at the tide of flaming leaf, the view it gives over the ocean of visible atmosphere will never fail to repay. Enchantment ebbs and flows, if you but take the time to be enchanted.

If Brute and I had learned no other lesson from all our peaks, it was to surrender ourselves to the mountain in hand, to forget plans and times, and to let ourselves get thoroughly bewitched. If you carry up clothes enough to keep warm, the

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mountain will do the rest. As the morning lengthened I fell to watching the birds, of which there seemed an unusual number. A downy woodpecker was rejoicing in virgin territory, and some chickadees were apparently doing him the honors of the summit. So small, so hospitable, so cheerful! Brute answered their matter-of-fact burr, and attracted a kinglet from the void. A snow-bird seemed positively glad to see us, whisking about the stone-piles, but never getting far away.

But Brute did not talk. Talking, with him, was by no means a way of passing time, but rather a method of communicating something that he wanted to say. The advantages of this probably overbalance the disadvantages, but sometimes I would have liked just a little babbling for the sake of a voice. After he had his fill of the surrounding emptiness, he began to hunt up the names of the ranges on the map, and to put them in my note-book. I am giving them as I find them, reading from north to northeast and on around. If you can't get up Slide this may help to a slight visualization of the panorama:

Due north, a deep ravine, the rising shoulder of Panther, with Vly far off.

Panther Peak, a magnificent expanse of hardwood forest with a few conifers.

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Shandaken Notch, steep walls and a hint of the farther valley.

Huntersfield (of nocturnal memory).

North Dome, actually domelike, falling into Broadstreet Hollow, with Mt. Richmond showing beyond.

Mt. Sheridan close, with Big Westkill's bulk high behind it.

Windham High Peak thirty miles away, with Hunter Mountain nearer, and Black Dome and Blackhead visible through Woodland Valley on the northeast.

Stony Clove, quickly rising to Plateau Mountain. Mt. Tremper nearer, and the Mink.

Kaaterskill High Peak in back of Mt. Pleasant.

Indian Head back of Mt. Tobias, a funny little melted ice-cream cone.

The sky-line here is easily the figure of a man lying down. It is known as the Old Man of the Mountains—a magnificent welter of rounded lines.

Then comes the Overlook Mountain in the distance, the Wittenberg dark in the foreground, with a cleft where Woodstock lies.

Mt. Cornell.

Far to the east they say that you can see Mt. Everett in Massachusetts.

Mt. Ticetonyk next, and Kingston lying low, with Hussey's Hill and the great Reservoir appearing over Balsam Top.

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Southeast lies High Point and Lake Mohonk, Break Neck, and far away Storm King of the Highlands.

Due south the long Shawangunk Range, with Cross Mountain and the slopes nearby where rise the waters of the Neversink.

Lone Mountain and the broad Table, with Peekamose beyond.

The rest of the horizon was hard to see because of trees. Double-Top was easily distinguishable to the west, with Graham next, and Hemlock in the foreground.

Big Injin and Eagle Mountain sitting, appropriately, on a nest of peaks of which the next to the last is Big Balsam.

Belle Ayre, with its tower, Big Injin Valley, and Lost Clove leading to Belle Ayre.

In the distance we could see Mt. Utsayantha watching over Stamford, then Bloomberg and Halcott, which spins the circle back to Panther and the great ravine.

It is a great sensation to live long at such an altitude, to eat one's lunch where eagles are out for theirs, between bites to devour the Berkshires with one's eyes, and to drink of the Hudson between cups of coffee. Finally Brute broke his reverie, motioning to the disappearing Storm King:

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"It 's not much use to boast of your silly little distances like that, when anybody can see mountains a hundred times as far."

"Are you wandering?" I asked.

He pointed up to where a lemon-colored moon hung like a cake-plate.

"There 's mountains on that, you told me once," he gurgled, "and snow on Mars, and spots on the sun, and here you are cackling about seeing into seven States at once. When do you expect to grow up?"

My next move was not a reassuring answer to the query.

There are several ways of leaving Slide. In summer a blazed trail over the Wittenberg gives a better view of the Ashokan and takes you down into Woodland Valley. Then you can venture into the Peekamose region, or you can follow our up-trail back to the road and go on down the Neversink through Branch, surely one of the loveliest roads in the world. But we looked over the northern edge, and a twin-idea came to us simultaneously. Although bluebirds had long since come to the lowlands, the snow down that declivity was deep and smooth and fairly hard. It occurred to us that, instead of laboring up Wittenberg, it would be far more fun to slide down Slide. The slope of the horse's neck was just right for such a performance, and we could connect with the

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little brook that flows into Woodland Creek and so keep our bearings. Accordingly, leaving the crumbs for the chickadees and taking a last lungful of the view, we went over the top.

To enjoy the next twenty minutes with us, please imagine a mountain slope of about forty-five degrees and of astonishing smoothness. The snow blanket was not stone-hard, but packed just enough to sustain weight. On the slope grew small trees, the underbrush being snow-covered to a great extent. Kindly picture Brute and me starting down this wooded, crusted slope very gingerly at first, crouching on toes, soon allowing ourselves to attain greater speed, which was easily regulated by braking with our heels or by swinging around a smooth birch and beginning over again. The technique of this sport was speedily acquired. A slight bend forward would increase the speed at once. If there was a bush in the road, you could tack, or shut your eyes and go through. There was but one danger—to catch one's leg beneath a limb fast in the snow at both ends. At our rate of falling, a leg could easily have been snapped without our noticing it, as it were.

But, as in running down a mountain, one does not count on being injured. The pace gets into the blood. We were able to keep parallel for some while; but Brute, the heavier, soon fell faster, in

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the path of the snowballs, which ricocheted ahead of us, heralding our coming. It was a grand game, this slide-and-stop method of falling down a mountain. We soon knew how fast we could go, and it was no inconspicuous speed. The hollow into which we were avalanching soon became obviously a stream-bed. Soon we heard the stream itself directly beneath us. Yet, since the crust held, we saw no reason why we should stop. My haunches grew wearier and wearier, but the spirit said, "On." We must have slid a mile. Certainly my gloves will never slide again.

In very good time we stopped. Five yards more and we should have made a waterfall of ourselves; for the brook, coming out of concealment, fell into a chasm, leaving us to pay for our fun by winding down its icy bed. How long we were doomed to curve as it curved, to make figure eights for fear of losing it, I cannot say. But this I will assert: if there is anything that does n't know its mind, it is a stream of water.

I should never counsel anybody to ascend Slide from that side. Yet if anybody does he will see beautiful woods and crystal streams. We soon found the mountain-side supporting larger trees. The brook grew by running, and finally, where it found a mate in another brook, we slackened our pace to account for stock. Our packs were on our backs. Our bones were in their joints. God was

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in His heaven, and so were we. What more could be desired?

The laughing beauty of the halting-place went straight to our hearts. The two streams, released from their songless dream beneath ice, joined hands and dropped down the ravine together in an exhilaration of white light. Ice glittered from the ledges, snow shone back into the wood, the wood was itself white with the cream and ivory of birch, and the sun shone levelly through the trees. We sat on the roots of a great hemlock and basked in the perfection of life.

For a moment the warmth of the slide was in our blood; the chill of the frosted grottos had not yet begun to penetrate. For a silver moment we rested, dazzled, almost breathless from the very splendor of our repose. Then we moved on.

My memory has often gone back to that vision of untenanted fairyland, with its dim actual mountain bulking through the trees. I would like to lead people up that stream to that very spot, if there would be any chance of their seeing what Brute and I beheld. But it would never be the same. Nature is not only lavish beyond computation in her variety of gifts: she must even vary the variety until one's head spins in the bewilderment of riches. Mostly we do not heed, cannot heed, being so busy with stancher things than beauty. But when we need refreshment it will

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always be there, this eternal fountain of beauty flowing in countless places, most of them half hidden.

There was one more surprise reserved for us that day. We had bounded down that brook until we were weary, and the sun as well. We had crossed the trail and met Dougherty's Brook, as the good map said we would; but habitations seemed a world away. Suddenly a silent bird flew a few yards ahead of me, and stopped to stare. It was a sleek and ruddy robin, whom we blessed, for we knew that worms must be in sight. And worms meant food and lodging—indirectly, of course. Occasionally one comes upon a robin in the deep wood—usually a second son off seeking his fortune, or perhaps camping out. Mostly, however, a robin is the precursor of the cow-bell, a forerunner of friends at hand. Nor was our robin to betray our trust. Within three minutes we were talking to the children of the pioneer who lived farthest up Woodland Valley. Once more we were in spring. The snow was but a thin line along rock ledges, and once more we dared think how hungry we were.

We ordered supper by cubic measure, and in the faint glow of early evening continued our walk down the valley. The cake-plate moon had long since been put away, but there was a surprising store of light. No night in the open is dark un-

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less it is clouded. Type cannot be read by starlight, but a watch-face can be made out on any ordinary night. Details of scenery are lost, but the dark of ranges, the light of rivers, show against the general blank. Starlight on a lake or a wide road is light enough to travel by. But at night the world is very large.

Woodland Valley was once and better named Snyder's Hollow. Some lily-livered namester with more sentimentality than sense did ill to deprive the late Snyder of his due. If he first settled in it, he was a discerning man and deserves the credit. If an impersonal name had to be found for the smiling curves and beckoning aisles of the valley, the first ass that brayed might have better taken Hee Haw Hollow to christen it with than the school-girlish and indistinguishable title of Woodland, where every other valley is woodland too.

This valley is a wander-way of sheer delight. You can loaf along it in the sunshine and watch the trout, or you can visit the little colony and talk with its founder, or explore into its stream-enlivened recesses. At its head the Wittenberg is its dark guardian, and Cross and Pleasant stand. From the last a ridge runs out a protecting arm along the entire valley, while on its western side great Panther sends out buttress after buttress to shelter it from storms. Into it flows the Pan-

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ther Kill, another cherubic, laughing brook, wilful as an Indian child. The vistas up these valley arms are altogether lovely. I have yet to find a fellow tramp who has not left part of his heart up Woodland Valley.

We were again upon the Esopus, to which we had said dubious *au revoir* the night before. By arrangement rather than by desire, we stopped at the Phœnicia post-office. The summons was there, three days old. Brute's sister had recovered from the measles, and his presence was requested. It was a dreadful blow, coming on top of so much pleasure. His feet were wet, his clothes were muddy, his hat was torn, his face was scratched, and I am not sure that his undersitting was not the sufferer from too much Slide; but the boy proper was in the rich and perfect bloom of health. He did not speak for a little, nor did I feel like conversation. The wealth of the last three weeks, on the interest from which I could support many a happy memory, had been so silently accumulating that I had not realized how much of it I was in debt to Vreeland for. . . .

He took the early morning train.

"Remember the ninth of June," I called to him.

"Call me a hop-toad if I 'm not there," he shouted back.

I strolled back to the empty town. There was a pleasant store, and the owner was intelligent on

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flies and full of tales about the recent trout-killings in the Esopus. I might have felt more disconsolate had not every once in a while the recollection of a certain agreement flashed across my mind with a joyous brain-wink: "Noon at the top-most rock of Shokan High Point on the ninth of June, shine or rain."

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CHAPTER XVI

SPRING AND MR. BURROUGHS

FAME lags behind the heels of greatness, because fame depends upon the insight of the masses, and the masses are mainly concerned with getting bread and butter. But John Burroughs has lived in his leisurely way long enough for fame to catch up, or at least part way up. He is famous now for what he accomplished a decade ago. A decade hence he will be still more famous for what he is doing now. There is no catching up with Oom John. He possesses a progressing intelligence. His eighty years have n't hurt his hearing, his eyesight, or his brain. Burroughs grows. The people who would dismiss him as a bird-fiend should read his book on Whitman. Those who believe that his poems are only verse might well study his contributions to philosophy. And those who would experience the inner charm of the Catskill country must know their Burroughs well. God made the Catskills; Irving put them on the map; but it is John Burroughs who has brought them home to us.

I first met him in the volume, "Locusts and

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Wild Honey." I very well remember that boarding-school episode. We surreptitiously stole into forbidden fields, and at a forbidden hour, to practise the sweet magic that the idyl preached. We found no honey, but I gained a friend.

Then came college days, and answers to my letters to him, and finally an invitation. I was to visit Slabsides. And when he walked me up the hill, and talked, not as some authors with his wits in winter quarters, but with the full strength and aroma of "A Bed of Boughs" or "Pepacton," how unreasonably natural it all seemed! The Burroughs that had existed for me on the living page was identical with the Burroughs before me in coat and beard. There was no change in him. I only was bigger. For, when one walks with Burroughs, one roots in the soil and flowers in the sky. My lungs had taken in a cosmic puff. It took me weeks to forget the feeling.

So, when Dr. Clara Barrus telephoned on a spring morning that he would meet me in the automobile at Kingston, I was glad, of course, but a little sorry, too. I supposed there would be a chauffeur, and that we 'd do sixty or seventy miles along smooth roads, and talk about the war.

But the Young Fellow himself was at the wheel. That characterization is not my impertinence, but my impression. His white beard shone in the sun, but he reached over to shake hands with me

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as energetically as the youth I had just seen off for France. There was a May-Day twinkle in his eye; his weather-tried cheeks showed firm. When he spoke, there was an Indian summer quality in his voice, a softness and strength, that made me glad. Dr. Barrus chose to guard the lunch baskets in the rear. It was to be an out-and-out Burroughs day.

We were to circle the lake of Ashokan. Spring shone through the opalescent softness of the morning. A haze brooded in the distant valleys, yet did not obscure the sun nor more than thinly veil the farther mountains. Our first view of the lake spread before us strange sheets of ice-filled water, willow-green, and ever before us rose the inviting mountains topped by Slide, looking, as our poet-driver said, "like the long back and shoulders of a grazing horse."

I told him how Brute and I had slid down the neck of that horse, and he talked about a hunt through the baffling mountains far beyond, when his quarry was an elusive lake; and all the while we sped along a perfect road. The air was fresh in our faces, and to me there was enjoyment intangible as a sailor's relish of salt spray in sitting there beside the master fieldsman. That day I took no notes.

I was indeed a lucky man, but luckier only by a degree than any who may read his books. For

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that is the last felicity of a writer, the ability to convey the whole of his personality in his written word. And that John Burroughs has. He sees, he penetrates, he makes his own, then makes his ours.

Sometimes we pass by the loveliest sights of this world simply because there has been nobody at our side to point them out. For it is hard to see that which has not been foreseen. We must first cherish what we would embrace. And most of us are still so blind that, though the ground lies open to our eyes, yet there are few to read. Study Burroughs' "The Divine Soil" and see what news lies in the dust. To the expert there are more secrets still than a Cassandra could surmise.

The ability to show is Burroughs' first right to popularity: he has shared the long road with any man who cares to be his comrade. Give him a true lover of berrying, of fishing, of trailing, of taking the seasons as they come, and because his sight is keen, his fancy warm, he will show that man the unguessed soul of many a familiar thing. And because the unguessed is so comforting the true lover of out-doors will bless him all his days. He does bless him, from Maine to California and back to Florida. Nor is his popularity bounded by the breadth of our land. It is as if he had made every migrant bird an ally for the spread of his fame. His bees are heard around the world.

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But Burroughs is not only popular: he is great, if greatness is, as I believe, triumphant personality. Some day you may drive up the long hill out of Roxbury and see the old homestead where the boy Burroughs grew up. A small weather-beaten house, a barn, an orchard wizened by the winds, some stony fields, a vast expanse of sky—that is the environment from which he turned to trade thought for thought with Emerson and Whitman, with Muir and Roosevelt, with Harriman, Edison, and the other great men of our time. Can you explain it? The genius in him not only bade him climb from the estate of barefoot boy to the confusing brightness of private car and executive mansion, but it kept his soul barefoot all the while. That is a triumph, too, for the American idea of true liberty—the liberty to find one's equals. But the greatest triumph lies with the man. He turned from his raspberry bushes and his grapes, plunged into the strongest currents of personality his contemporaries could afford, and yet emerged himself, ready to return to his simple-hearted farmerhood. Loyal to himself, to his conception of the universe, he refused to lose his identity for any pottage. The result is a man whose friends are legion, a writer whose work still flows with the original fountain freshness, a philosopher whose devotion to his vision of the truth has had its certain effect upon our nation.

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While I was thinking these things, and while Mr. Burroughs was pointing out some beauties of Nature, the car nearly went over the bank. I think the Doctor sighed. "So, so, Doctor," said the chauffeur; "you will not die before your time." I resolved to perish inaudibly if it must be. Just then we drew up before a spectacle so beautiful, so ethereal, that all who see it are strangely moved, although it is but a group of fountains.

It is in this lonely basin, miles from any city, that the water which has been collecting from the shining mountains goes through a certain rite of purification before it flows on to fulfil its mission. From a hundred hidden sources, columns of water rise into the air, mingle in flashings of light, and fall again. Not only does the sun light them, but they seem animated with an innate splendor. Constant as faith these waters rise, changeful as a dream they waver and fall. We sat entranced as if we were witnessing some exquisite and secret rite of Eastern festival. From sunrise till sunset, and perchance beneath the changing moon, the perpetual play of these white waters goes on, a prayer for purity.

I don't know which was the more forceful aspect of this surprise, the sheer beauty of it or the meaning of the thing. For this scene, contrived for nobody's spectacle, nor yet for mere utility,

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seemed to typify the vision of the coming time when use and beauty should at last be married for the common weal. Already the Empire State has verified the dream of such a marriage in this Catskill Park. Here we were motoring on a marvelous highway beside a magic lake made for a city's use, viewing a water-garden of such beauty as Scheherazade had never dreamed, and making toward a mountain park of sacred forest and protected stream created to be a people's pleasure-land. Little of all this could John Burroughs have foreseen as he jolted over these lonely mountains sixty years ago, hunting for a job.

As we approached Tongore he told me a little of the past. It was in 1837 that he was born at Roxbury on the western slopes of the Catskills. When he was seventeen he quit the farm, bundled his sensibilities together, and made off to seek, not his fortune, but a position as school-teacher. It may soften the lot of present-day school-teachers to be told that his salary was "eleven dollars a month and board around."

We visited the village, a tawdry group of dwellings with a populous burying-ground, but scant ten living families, I should judge. The sun fell softly on the graves where so many that he knew and the one that he loved lie. By reason of strength, he had reached his fourscore, but almost alone. How inscrutable is this impulse to live

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on! If living were a whim to be laid aside at will, I wonder how many would see thirty. In days as sweet as the one we were enjoying, yet years before the guns of Sumter, he had gone sweethearting and honeymooning over these mountains. He leaned against one of the great boulders, thinking silently and long of things brought back by that same light upon the mountains and the breath of the same sweet returning spring. At last, caressing the rock, he said:

"Ah! That is granite. Granite will stand the racket."

Our road, ever curving about the lake, now began to invade the mountains. Valleys cut deep, and from them came cool breezes damp with the melting snowdrifts that still lay in the deeper gorges.

"We used to call those late drifts the heel of winter," said Mr. Burroughs. "As soon as the heel is lifted the flowers invade the land."

It is forty miles around the Reservoir, and there is a special beauty in each mile. Every cape rounded meant for us new vistas of green vales, new inlets of blue water; and all the time, in addition to the beauty of the landscape, I felt the stimulus of the presence beside me, the genius who came out of the air quite as much as out of the family. For, though you search the record and find the Burroughs branch of his ancestry "retir-

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ing, peace-loving, solitude-loving," and the Kelly branch full of "revolutionary blood, longings, temporizing, mystical," yet there were other boys in the family of whom the world has never heard.

At just the right moment Burroughs found Emerson, and at another Audubon. They fired his brain and his heart, and ever since that fire has never failed him, though his vicissitudes have been many. For a genius, like other people, has to feel his way. He taught school in half a dozen places, dreamed of wealth over a patent shoe-buckle, studied medicine, married, went to Washington to be a clerk, wrote essays after the day's work, breakfasted with Walt Whitman on Sundays, found the longing for the soil too severe to be withstood, moved to the Hudson, once more in sight of the Catskills, raised his ton of grapes and his pound of literature each year, and lived.

We had curved round to the little town of Shokan, near the site of Olive, where he had found his wife, and all unknowing I was coming to the water-shed of my day.

Such things happen and are over, often without our knowing it. I was realizing that the hours were precious, inimitable, that the experience could not be repeated; but I was not prepared for the dramatic moment preparing. We had gone down by a by-road to the site of Dr. Hull's house,

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where Burroughs had studied medicine, when, in the quandary of youth, poor, dissatisfied with teaching, trying to support a wife, depressed by the Rebellion, he was casting around for his place in the veiled scheme of things. One day he closed his book on anatomy and wrote a poem, simple, elemental, accessible. It was his confession of faith. There, on the very spot, we found ourselves at the exact anniversary of his first visit, sixty-four years ago. How beautifully the inspiration had taken words unto itself! So, as you read these words, conceive you this picture: an erect prophet with a prophet's beard standing in the noontide beauty of spring fields, thinking back to those days dark with their future unexplored. Hear his voice, sweet, low, unshaking, repeat this confession of faith—faith in the unalterable fact that character and destiny are one—composed at the darkest moment of his life:

WAITING

Serene I fold my hands and wait,
  Nor care for wind, nor tide, nor sea;
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
  For lo! my own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
  For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid th' eternal ways,
  And what is mine shall know my face.

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Asleep, awake, by night or day,
The friends I seek are seeking me.
No wind can drive my bark astray,
Nor change the tide of destiny.

What matter if I stand alone?
I wait with joy the coming years;
My heart shall reap where it hath sown,
And garner up its fruit of tears.

The waters know their own, and draw
The brook that springs in yonder heights;
So flows the good with equal law
Unto the soul of pure delights.

The stars come nightly to the sky,
The tidal wave comes to the sea:
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,
Can keep my own away from me.

There was suitable silence for a moment, and then a strange bird shot by a couple of yards above us. Its bullet-round head and sharp wings seemed the very emblems of savagery. Instantly our host became the Burroughs of the essays, the Burroughs whose major interest is in birds.

"See the pigeon-hawk!" he exclaimed, as eagerly as anybody else would have said. "Do look at Vesuvius!" Out under the genial sun and on the new grass, we sat down to lunch.

As long as the mesh of memory wears, there will always be strength and inspiration for me in the

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Photograph by the author

MAN-NOT-AFRAID-OF-COMPANY

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Photograph by J. B. Allison

WOODCHUCK LODGE

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retrospect of that nooning. It was an epic lunch, dimensional and qualitative. We discussed the nature of God and of deviled eggs. We sealed the fate of fake naturalists and many a round of cake at the same time. Olives, art, more coffee, the stream of consciousness, all lit by the caressing sun, occupied time and space for us. In the midst of a cheese sandwich, he said: "I have lived long, but I am convinced that the heart of Nature is sound at bottom. The divine consciousness cares little for the human frame. Nature is cruel. She does not exist solely for the sake of man. Man happens to be the bloom of her present endeavor, perhaps the end of life on our cooling sphere. And humanity is itself the justification of this consciousness of being, this latest bloom of Nature. The fruit may come some other where and in some other form."

That is, of course, but the intuitive thought of a man whose sensitiveness to the truth observable about him is marked. It is intuition, but I would hang more on the intuition of this man than on the logic of the ablest indoor debater.

I am not writing a life of Burroughs. Dr. Clara Barrus's "Our Friend John Burroughs" is a biography of charm and detail. I am writing of the spirit of the Catskill country; and, as I conceive him, John Burroughs is the living embodiment of his native uplands. While, unfortunately, the

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theory of environment accounting for the individual does not hold water, there are certain eminent persons who seem to sum up an environment, to express the soul of a landscape. Wordsworth becomes by nature and association the genius of his Lake Country. Muir seems to have gathered up the grandeur and lonely distances of his West. Muir would have stifled in Massachusetts. Burroughs is the spiritualization of the view from Woodchuck Lodge, itself typical of the Catskill best.

The Catskills are a well watered mountainland compounded of Cooper's tales and the Psalms of David, deep forests and green pastures, living heights and still waters. There are no jagged peaks, no lava flows, no vast sterilities of sand or ice. The holy of holies, however, has always been a quiet place. Let sublimity stun. The heart warms easier to serenely sloping ranges and the sweet-scented pastures of man's oldest pursuit. And Burroughs is like that. He never wrestles with the angels; he accepts their invitation.

That qualitiy of repose eliminates him from the topmost circle of great souls as we now rate them. Burroughs is happy, the master of his own inner harmony. I doubt whether the greatest have been happy, or even longed to be. They have chosen struggle, rivalry, the clash of conquest, up-striv-

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ings. Burroughs has not avoided the fight so much as that his nature has not known the necessity of it. But this attitude in which I paint him is very different from complaisance. Still active, he stands on the bluff of eternity, hand to brow, peering into the dim perspective of the spirit. His feet have never left fact. There is no page of his not lettered with truth. He makes his way among the dusty verities, but his outlook is free. He has busied himself with the things at his hand —the pebble, the feather, and the flower. But he has not stopped there. He has followed out the clue, and with his leisurely tirelessness has got pretty far along on the endless road into the obdurate dark. There is only one thing more tenacious than his will to search. It is his faith.

Some one gave John Burroughs the Indian name meaning Man-Not-Afraid-of-Company. And he is wonderfully generous with himself. At West Park, where his vineyards are, he is visited. At Slabsides, the retreat he built himself, where he might write and eat the bread of privacy, he is besieged. Squadrons of school-teachers, clergymen in multiple, students, capitalists, artists, climb the hill; and he is at home to all.

But high in the western Catskills, at the old home whence came the first impulse toward his calling, is his best-loved dwelling-place, Woodchuck Lodge. There, in the old barn-study, he

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has written his enchanting pastorals. There he will be buried when he is ready to pass on. The record of his life is a large, aromatic volume. Literary values change, and some of his criticisms may lose their force. Philosophies change, and his views may fade in the growing light. But the loveliness that he has caught between his covers from the larger loveliness about him is a genuine contribution to the world's delight. And, first and last, he is a Catskills' child. His youth bounded those mountains on the west, his maturity on the east, and his finest essays deal with their structure and their soul.

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CHAPTER XVII

INTERMEZZO

"My garden is a pleasant place
Of sun-glory and wind-grace.
There is an ancient cherry-tree—"

EVERY morning I read that while I was getting, not into flannel shirt and tramping togs, but into the cuffs and collars of outrageous fashion. For my week of fishing had long since fled. The dandelions had bloomed and blown, the commuters changed from derby to straw, and I had been sucked so completely under by the vortices of business that my one taste of outdoors was to read:

"There is an ancient cherry tree
Where yellow warblers sing to me,
And an old grape arbor where
A robin builds her nest, and there—"

My felt hat, with the trout-flies in its band, hung at hand. I had got out my copy of "Pepacton" to be re-read. I had intended daily to write to

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those new friends who lived in the Mountains of the Sky, and I sighed sometimes when the sunset was very long in fading. I wanted to drop things and go, for—

"A heart may travel very far
To come where its desires are."

But, aside from occasional letters beginning "Dear friend Morris" and ending "Your friend Brute," trout-flies, Pepacton, and even a certain "topmost rock of Shokan High Point on the ninth of June," were lost in the maze of madness termed "awfully busy." Only sometimes, when I paused after reading:

"My garden is a pleasant place
Of moon-glory and leaf-grace—"

did I realize the subconscious hold upon me the land had on which that garden looked. What a very pleasant place the garden was, beside the broad Hudson, back from the hilly street of quiet old Catskill and she who distilled its "moon-glory and leaf-grace" into such exquisite poetry lived there, Catskill-born. The Miss Louise Driscoll, who has brought the loveliness of the Catskill country to us in her art as authoritatively as Burroughs and Birge Harrison in theirs, is letting

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me repeat here the poem that she wrote and read me near "the ancient cherry tree." I thank her for it, and Mr. Wharton Stork, too, in whose "Contemporary Verse" it first appeared, for letting me reprint

MY GARDEN IS A PLEASANT PLACE

My garden is a pleasant place
Of sun-glory and wind-grace.
There is an ancient cherry-tree
Where yellow warblers sing to me,
And an old grape-arbor where
A robin builds her nest, and there
Above the lima beans and peas,
She croons her little melodies,
Her blue eggs hidden in the gre
Fastness of that leafy screen.

Here are striped zinnias that bees
Fly far to visit, and sweet peas
Like little butterflies, new-born;
And over by the tasseled corn
Are sunflowers and hollyhocks
And pink and yellow four-o-clocks.

Here are humming-birds that come
To seek the tall delphinium,
Songless bird and scentless flower
Communing in a golden hour.

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There is no blue like the blue cup
The tall delphinium holds up,
Nor sky, nor distant hill, nor sea,
Sapphire nor lapis lazuli.

My lilac trees are old and tall,
I cannot reach their bloom at all.
They send their perfume over trees
And streets and roofs to find the bees.

I wish some power would touch my ear
With magic touch and make me hear
What all the blossoms say, and so
I might know what the winged things know.
I 'd hear the sunflower's magic pipe,
"Gold-finch, gold-finch, my seeds are ripe!"
I 'd hear the pale wistaria sing,
"Moon-moth, moon-moth, I 'm blossoming!"
I 'd hear the evening primrose say,
"Oh, firefly! come, firefly!"
And I would learn the magic word
The ruby-throated humming-bird
Drops into cups of larkspur blue,
And I would sing them all to you!

My garden is a pleasant place
Of moon-glory and leaf-grace.
Oh, friend, wherever you may be!
Will you not come to visit me?

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Over fields and streams and hills,
I 'll pipe like yellow daffodils,
And every little wind that blows
Shall take my secret as it goes.
A heart may travel very far
To come where its desires are.
Oh! may some power touch your ear,
Be kind to me, and make you hear!

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CHAPTER XVIII

A RENDEZVOUS WITH JUNE

THERE are many sorts of beacons to pull us safely through the last hard mile. The horse has his manger, the philosopher his *tertium quid,* and even the life-prisoner can count upon his pardons. And so had I through the dark age of May my open sesame to the infinity of corridor through which the school-year drags its hind quarters. I had but to close my eyes and say "Noon at the topmost rock of Shokan on the ninth of June," and the little brawling blockheads would dissolve into thin air, and a close-up of a young fellow with wide-set, steady eyes, broad shoulders, and an old felt hat would occupy the screen.

Luck and I beat the calendar, as it happened. For the ninth of June was still seven astronomical hours away, and the sun was contentedly declining between Samson Mountain and Peekamose as I emerged from the fringe of scrub balsam and deposited my limp anatomy upon the "topmost rock." My pack had put in its final licks on my shoulders with a vengeance as it found me nearing that spot. Never, never climb High Point

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the way I did. It had seemed the shortest way, straight from the Reservoir to the top. And the mosquitoes did not seem to get out of wind. But, for anything equipped with less than six legs and a pair of wings, I advise the trail from West Shokan.

The top was full pay for the climb; and the climb, despite the insects just mentioned, was joy enough for me with a summer ahead, school behind, and the pleasant hardships of the woods about me. When one mounts nearly three thousand feet in a mile, not even mosquitoes themselves can take one's mind from the fact that the next place to put one's foot is overhead—or else very nearly overhead. Fortunately, I had time to be sensible, which means, in a question of mounting steep slopes, the slowest possible pace. The man who will pull one foot after another, taking time to place it, stepping around obstacles instead of over, never allowing himself to lose breath, can climb all day, will cover three times as much altitude as the chap who hurries, and at the end will be nearly as fresh as when he began. This is the solemnest truth, and therefore the hardest to believe, and next to impossible to practise. But it pays.

Nearly everybody not entirely barren of sentiment has desired to spend a night on a mountain-top, and the number who yield to their desire is

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so few that one would judge our race to be a very self-disciplining body if other explanations did not arise. Explanations do arise, and the people don't. I rest with saying that I am sorry. If I could have wafted a score of friends to the top of High Point that night, they would have granted me justification—while now—

Mid-June below was the end of May on my peak. Strawberries that had made my dessert along the lake were in bud about the top. Columbines that had nodded heartlessly at me from their grottos near the base showed only the pale promise of their beauty in clumps of fernlike leaves. The sweet white violet grew small, but when luck led me to the proper flower I was rewarded with a breath more delicate than even that of the wild rose.

My walk of the forenoon had been between fields of astounding brilliance. All the seasons had been kaleidoscoped into one, it seemed, and spread along the wayside for admiration's sake. A meadow, white with daisies in one corner, would be set on fire by the flames of orange hawk-weed, to be, in turn, extinguished by a shower of meadow-rue. Pools of blue gentian reflected heaven, and ripples of white clover broke here and there into a sweet-scented spray.

A little way within the wood I saw the wild azalea and the buds of the laurel. In certain

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places later we were to find the laurel in immense profusion. Clintonia, purple-fringed orchis, Solomon's seal, indeed all the delicate familiar loveliness of the spring wood, shone in whites and pinks, yellows and blues, along my path. And at the top the bunch-berry extended its white welcome.

I did not have to concern myself about food or shelter. I had carried the former already prepared, and for the latter I spread my rubber blanket on the thick moss in a little hollow beneath some stunted balsam. I could give my whole attention to the spectacle staged horizon-round.

If I should work up a headache trying to portray the wonder of that night, I could not convince you that I enjoyed it; neither am I such a trusting dotard as to try. At first I thought that I was n't going to, either. My body-guard of gnats received my rebukes in a biting silence. But as the sun withdrew so did they, leaving a little blood still in the bank.

I ate supper, sitting on a cloth-of-golden moss, leaning against a rock that had settled and hardened before ever the roots of the first carboniferous fern had groped for soil. I looked over a section of the world that man thinks he controls, but that simply laughs in his face. I could see some of the tiny places where he had thrown a few boards together for shelter and where he forgets

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his vast labors in sleep. But I had to hunt for them. All about them swam the ineffable green of spring, light for fields and dark for woods; and out over the plain was reaching, creeping the effacing night. Only in one direction did man seem to have made his mark—in that marvelous lake, the Reservoir of Ashokan.

It lay, outstretched and slim, amethyst above, sapphire beneath, a miracle to have been made by hands.

Westward a tangle of mountain valleys were drowning in the twilight. Only a top here and there caught the last rose.

The more extravagant is sentiment, the sooner it flies away; and I was glad to weight down my feelings with chicken sandwiches and hot tea. The absurd niceties of habit that make us go to bed when we are not sleepy, and sit up since it is not time to go to bed, lose something of their force on mountain-tops. I wrapped up in my blanket, and watched the rose turn to gray, the gray to colorless dark. The stars came from their hiding and began the night's march. There was no blackness. Probably I dozed. But it did not seem long until a faint shine appeared, a cloudlet turned a wild-rose pink, and there was a new day—the ninth of June.

I am quite sure of one thing: if you think some action seems scarcely worth the labor, the dis-

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comfort, *and yet you 'd rather like to do it,* that is the thing to gird your loins and do. There is nothing so weakening as ambition frustrated by doubt, nothing so encouraging as something put through, which is the chief retort the foolish mountaineer can make. There is scarcely anything sillier than marching up a mountain and then marching down again; there is scarcely anything more satisfying if you 've wanted to do it. And as life is a succession of flippant nothings for most, anyway, even a physical mountain-peak now and then need not seem too trivial to try. If there are sermons in stones, there is a good year's preaching in one mountain.

Almost before the fawn-colored light could be called dawn, I was treated to such a matinée of bird-song as I have rarely heard. A flock of white throat sparrows sat concealed in the low trees, and gave their full-voiced cadences together, or following each other in quick succession, as in some Mozart allegretto. Their falling triplets, wistful at nightfall, are daintily glad at dawn, and to me, half asleep, seemed the very choir of fairyland.

Coffee warmed me, and after I had watched the sun flood the great eastern valley, I made a fire of gnarled old wood, so that Brute might see the smoke, rolled in my blanket beneath the balsam, and—woke to a hand laid gently on my shoulder.

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CHAPTER XIX

MOUNT ASHOKAN AND THE RESERVOIR

ARISING at dawn in midsummer has one insuperable disadvantage. The ordinary breakfast hour seems like noon, and noon like doomsday finally arrived. As for the interval from doomsday till dusk—there is nothing calculated to give such a fair idea of eternity in advance. When I had finally awakened to the fact that Brute was there and had been there for two hours, had guessed the situation and prepared a meal, we sat down with an all-devouring passion to pick up the threads of the past and a little food. The latter he called dinner and I breakfast, the hour being the confusing one of ten by the zodiac, eleven by the government, and others slightly different by our two watches.

When June chooses to smile, it is the most charming smile of the round year. The sky was clear to the very flying-off place, and the Reservoir shone, a revelation of completed beauty to Brute, who had seen it in the making.

"It 's funny that lake was overlooked by the Almighty," he said devoutly.

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Photograph by J. B. Allison

STAMFORD FROM UTSAYANTHA

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Photograph by J. B. Allison

NEARING GRAND GORGE

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The remark crystallized what I had been thinking. The lake was so beautiful, fitted so well into border-land of mountain and plain, that it did not look raw and new. To tell the geologic truth, it had been on the original plan of the globe. The surveyors found evidences of a pre-glacial lake. All they did was to put it back. This they did supremely well by damming the Esopus where the ice-sheet had worn down the embankment and let the water out.

The story of the gigantic work is unfortunately submerged in the other stories of our incredible young century. It has been fascinatingly told by Dr. Edward Hagaman Hall in a work entitled "The Catskill Aqueduct," which he modestly calls a pamphlet, but which is a novelette for interest. He tells how drought came to New York; how the supply of water, even when rationed out, fell until there was enough for but four more days; and how the great city, on its islands and fringes of the continent, was in a panic.

Far-seeing men clearly set forth the facts, and convinced by calculation that almost before a comprehensive system of water-supply could be worked out the city would be in perpetual danger of water-famine. Since all the local sources were taxed, the attention was directed to the Catskills and Adirondacks—the two great park-lands of the Empire State.

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Dr. Hall's well-pruned tale of the feats of engineering, the feats of finance, of social organization, elevate statistics to their proper level of interest. While the building of the Aqueduct was given less nation-wide attention than the contemporary Canal at Panama, the labors were just as Herculean, the problems as staggering. To create a tunnel capable of delivering a half billion gallons of mountain water every day, to drive it through the solid rock of Manhattan, to conduct it beneath the Hudson at a level of 1,114 feet below the sea, to have it avoid subterranean caves, and, at one stroke to contrive a lake to mother it which should be pure, capacious, and as beautiful as poetry—surely this was a task to test the efficiency of a democracy.

The site of the Reservoir contained some seven villages, a railroad, and many cemeteries. But the corpses were n't allowed to stand between six million thirsty souls and their thirst. So the villages of West Shokan, Boiceville, Brodhead, Olive Bridge, Brown Station, Glenford, Ashton, and West Hurley gave up their dead as well as their identity. Their lands were purified and submerged to the extent of over eight thousand acres, averaging a depth of fifty feet. This was enough water to drown out Manhattan Island to the depth of thirty feet, or, in other words, a hundred and thirty-two billion gallons.

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Naturally, the dwellers between Ashokan and the sea have an interest in the way this flood is held in leash. There are five and a half miles of dams and dikes. The first line of defense is a line of boulders embedded in concrete and a hundred and ninety feet thick at the base, two hundred and forty feet high, and a thousand long. The entire dam is a mile long.

The second line, of nearly five miles, is a dike whose heart is of concrete, its flesh of earth pressed almost to the consistency of granite. This runs along the south. To the east are other dikes. On the west and north the Catskills form a wall rising abruptly from the plain of three thousand feet.

Around this lake the State has built a road of great beauty. The construction and the setting are beautiful beyond the first visit to comprehend. Already its magnificence is known, and soon will be justly famous. When the trees that are planted have grown, and when the edges of the lake will have taken to themselves a wildness consonant to the mountain setting, then the forty-mile circle will have become a part of every motorist's itinerary.

The Kingston people and the inhabitants of the by-lying villages must feel themselves translated, after so long staring across a waterless plain. With mountain-ranges, vistas of ravines, pine-cov-

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ered points, waters sacred to the sun and forever free from spoliation, the white rites of the "veiled women" in the beautiful aëration plant, the simple and straightforward architecture of spillway and dividing weir, and ever the ribbon of road against the hills,—nothing more is needed to minister to the eye.

There is much more than the eye can ever perceive implied in the accomplishment of this work. It spells the highest sort of triumph—popular cooperation with the genius of science. It forecasts a wise middle life for our century, which is so rampant in its adolescence.

It is this triumph of civic enterprise that offsets the failure of brotherhood abroad, in a measure. New York's great parks and roads and citizen activities mean more than the things themselves. It is something to have insured New York City's water supply. It is something far greater to have employed thousands of men and handled millions of public money without political scandal and without a strike. Thanks to model conditions of housing, sanitation, food, and recreation, the army of workmen preserved an unprecedented morale. The morrow, we are told, belongs to the masses in their own right, and not as a gift from the few. New York State has shown the short cut to this morrow by using *the faithful labor of the many,*

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under the direction of the few, for the good of all.

The scheme for New York's water-supply cannot stop with the Ashokan. At Gilboa they are utilizing the Schoharie water, which will flow beneath the mountains and into the Esopus at Shandaken. The other Catskill water-sheds, the Rondout and Catskill, with their three hundred square miles, will probably be added to the five hundred and sixty-five of the Esopus and Schoharie. And then the Adirondacks!

Eventually the Catskills will be an immense pleasure park, as much of the Adirondack forest is now, set aside for the health, wealth, and happiness of the entire East. This does not mean that ancient settlers will be disinherited, nor that the timber, the game, the berries, and the fish cannot be used. It means that the great encircling populations will have a place, large as luxury and rich as nature, to recuperate in, where vandalism shall not intrude, and where such things as constitute the commonwealth may be enjoyed by all. May the Empire State continue to exercise her prerogatives as wisely as she has begun!

We had sat for a while looking at the white lake stretched below us before Brute asked:

"How many High Points is this we 've been up?"

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"About five."

"Well, I suggest that we do a little mountain-naming ourselves. This grand-stand mountain is a kind of reserved seat for the Reservoir show, and I call it plumb foolish to mix it up with all the other High Points and High Peaks. What shall we christen it?"

"It is the lake's mountain," I suggested. "But we can't smash champagne or liberate a dove."

"There 's the bug dope. We might christen it with citronella."

But something better offered. Picking up the coffee-pot, Brute stood in a reverential attitude by the "topmost rock," on which he poured what remained of breakfast, saying:

"With these grounds I dub thee *Mount Ashokan.*"

And so I hope the Lord High Surveyor may put it down.

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CHAPTER XX

THE HAPPY VALLEY

OUR mountain was not only the best viewpoint of the Reservoir that we had climbed to—it also gave us an illuminating idea of the country we were about to explore. As Utsayantha constitutes the northwest redoubt of Manitou's great fortress, so does Mount Ashokan hold the key to the southeast. To the north, northwest, and west rise the tumbled ranges of the southern Catskills, to the very vitals of which we wanted to penetrate. So, packing up, we made the road into South Hollow by midday, and fell, as had become our customary luck in the earlier spring, upon one of the most interesting fellows in the whole region—'Gene Kerr, bear-killer.

It was his barn that arrested us. Nine bear skulls and some skins of other beasts decorated this remarkable shack, and in a jiffy we were talking about two-pound trout and the toothsomeness of bear-steak over the fence that separated us from Mr. Kerr and the tidiest little garden it has ever been the good fortune of deer to feed in.

"You fellows must need a good meal in front

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to balance those air packs," said Mr. Kerr, leaning on his hoe.

"Just what we 're looking for, a three-course balancer," we cried.

"Well, I guess she kin fix you up."

All through dinner we listened to the hunting recollections of this vigorous old man, whose age was hinted at neither by the light in eye nor by his upstanding bearing. Not only bear and deer and trout and partridges and gray squirrels were his frequent game, but he liked the fun of bringing in coons and skunks, mink and woodchuck, white rabbits, porcupines, and an occasional weasel. He said that he heard bob-cats occasionally.

"It beats all, how thick deers is gettin'," he said, and the talk would veer around to bears continually.

"They just swarm in the beech-nut years. I got two last year, when they snowed up, and three afore that. Sheep's head in a trap done it. One of 'em weighed in three hundred pound, dressed."

He took down his guns to explain their points as affectionately as a mother would her twins. His graying hair seemed no more to betoken the long winter than October flurries, and his love of the woods—just the day-long wandering in them, so he had gun in hand—was fine to see.

His wife, equally energetic, had other tastes.

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"Oh, if somebody would only come along and start something!" she exclaimed. "Ever since the water-works was started, the valley 's been dead—no summer people, nobody to sell butter and eggs to. And it 's a beautiful place, too."

We acknowledged it.

"And he spends his days, and nights too, chasing through the woods, with me wonderin' what 's happened to him. Not so long ago he kep' me up to midnight while he was toting in a bear."

"No! Only the hind quarters, ma."

Mr. Kerr's present living was being made out of ginseng root, it appeared. I hope that Mrs. Kerr gets her wish. Truly the valley of the Bush Kill is a secluded haven of extraordinary charm. Up South Hollow goes a trail to Mount Ashokan; up Mine Hollow can be found the diggings of those deluded prospectors who thought that they at last had found gold; up Kanape Brook are charming little falls; and along Watson Hollow, the main thoroughfare from West Shokan to the western country, are sites for summer homes offering every inducement a summer home can have.

We had thought to climb Peekamose, but found that there was no trail, and that bellying clouds were drifting too thickly over the ramparts ahead of us to offer much assurance to explorers. So, now balanced fore and aft, we left our entertainers, to cross the divide.

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In the darkening afternoon, on a road arched with trees and soft with grass, we marched silently. Vistas up wooded ravines opened up for the moment, and little waterfalls flung some word at us as we passed; but, for the most part, we were free from the outer world. Even the birds, which had made the settlements bright with song and flutter, were few. A vireo, looking at us big-eyed, a warbler sighing to himself in the deep wood, a disconsolate pewee, that was all.

The road climbed for about four miles, reached a level, less densely wooded,—where an old father porcupine slid down a birch as slick as an apple-thieving urchin,—then began a descent of five miles to Sundown. We met nobody, said almost nothing. It was good enough to be walking together again; and, though I was tired, being not yet hardened, we swung along the narrow lake by the road, confident that we would be put up at Peekamose Lodge.

Peekamose Lodge sleeps in a little gulf of rock formed by the intersection of two ravines. One house is occupied by a care-taker who owns a savage beast miscalled a dog but really a reincarnation of Nero. Across the ravine the other house is occupied by a gentleman at odds with his only neighbor, and guarded, not by a dog, but by a flock of trained gnats. Thither we climbed, footsore and hungry, after having tried to find

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some hospitable soul at the care-taker's, where Nero was jumping around on his chain and acting as if he wanted a little fun with Christians.

The gentleman who lived in such splendid isolation referred me to his opponent for supper, and to that man—who had just returned from somewhere—we wearily climbed back across the no-man's-land ravine. The rival gentleman said that the enemy always referred people to him for meals, and that he was n't allowed anyway and *he* knew it, and besides there was n't anything in the house.

Only weariness quenched the wrath within me. Sundown village was miles away; a mist was beginning to seep through the foliage; the insults from Nero, added to the injuries from the gentleman's gnats, were intolerable. The meek are not uniformly successful in inheriting the earth, it appears. Brute, equally enraged, but also tired to a semblance of civility, inquired of our future prospects.

"Down the road about four mile there 's a postmaster who may take you in. He 's a queer one, too, and writes books."

Judging that anything that seemed queer to this strange company might suit us, we set out once more in the falling dusk. It was a road that I can now look back on with pleasure, but then the fatigue that ached from shin to thigh pre-

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cluded any but a lamenting interest in the beautiful curves, the rich wood smells, the extraordinary waterfalls. One of these had eaten a hole through the cliff, pouring through the ring in a cascade of plenty. We came to a blue pool where the waters of the Rondout, the clearest of all waters, had caught the secret of the skies screened from them. It was in some such pool that the old-world goddesses used to bathe. If Pan ever comes to America, he will love the Blue Hole most of all, and its rocky ledges crowned with the fine-textured beech are certainly the place for him to sit and make his music in. Even to us, drooping with exhaustion, there was still a prayer of admiration possible.

At length we came to a house that might be the postmaster's, though there was no sign, and a Union Jack and tri-color flew from the flag-pole with the Stars and Stripes. We knocked. A man, the instant impression of whom was medium height, graying hair, a kindly, inquisitive eye, and a genial smile, opened the door.

"Is this—are you—that is, can you direct us to the postmaster of Peekamose?" I asked, my wits sliding into first rather slowly after the long pull.

He already had guessed the situation, and in a quiet but systematic manner set about making us feel as much at home as the Prince of Wales at

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Windsor Castle. From the bathroom we emerged clothed in our *status quo ante;* from the dining-room we sauntered as satisfied as pelicans; from the den we retired to the living-room, beginning to wonder just what the limitations of this man were; and from the living-room we went to bed,—six hours later,—fully satisfied with the capabilities of Chance as guide and guardian. We had stumbled upon the radiant House of Dimock, its master, author, explorer, hunter, ex-millionaire.

There is a beautiful flower that unfolds, petal by petal, beginning with thorn and ending with a rare perfume—once in a hundred years. So did our stay in the Happy Valley seem to me. Compare that enraging moment when we had turned from the slimy-fanged Nero and the stings of outrageous fortune (and the gnats) to the cactus at its worst; compare the hospitable welcome at the door to the first petal, that evening of conversation to the full bloom of pleasure, and you can readily see how the same thing could never happen over again in a century.

Anthony W. Dimock's story, as he tells it himself in "Wall Street and the Wilds," is a sort of Arabic-American Nights Tale which immediately relates him to the Aladdin family. He was not only a poor boy who lisped in numbers and the millions came: he was still boyish when they went —a rare figure in the annals of millionaires. He

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kept his youth by hunting buffalo. Later he sought to keep the buffalo by turning the sentiment of his famous Camp Fire Club toward conservation. Oscillating between the labyrinthine ways of finance and the open wilderness, he has enriched his life with such deposits of adventure, and mingling in big events, that to open the vein of reminiscence before the fire on a wet night in June is to land one in an El Dorado of wonderment.

The den, clearly, had been stocked by one who understood life. Art, humor, achievement, the love of people, the standing for beauty, sanity, daring, and the unknown quantity that gives the mellowing touch to daring—these were the qualities represented. His son Julian's pictures of tarpon-jumping, of the Everglades, are probably as fine as can be taken. The men who have sent him words of sympathy or congratulation are many of the most interesting men of the United States. The strange coincidences that a long and active life have collected seem to take the thread from Atropos. The den was a room to revert to in delight at the fullness of life.

I think the great fact of our visit was that a man who had looked into the extreme brilliance of success, the extreme blackness of defeat, should have such kind and unembittered eyes. They had caught the softening of the June hills as well as

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the sparkle of the Rondout. It was Nature's triumph, this capture of a man who had seen everything, of a woman who had the world to choose from—the Catskills' triumph in particular. Yet, as we continued on the morrow down the beautiful windings of the valley, we did not wonder why neither Florida nor the West had failed in competition with its soft beauties to lure these people for aye. There was something ultimately fitting in the environment to their open hospitality. And Brute and I have often referred to the charming picture since: the low gray house set in the green dale, flashing brook and wooded mountain, the lord and lady of the demesne dispensing a gracious hospitality to wanderers, while ever and anon there arrive messengers from the outside world with tribute, or, the best of tribute—friends.

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CHAPTER XXI

BEAVERKILL BUSH

THE Catskill country resembles a four-leaved clover. One leaf includes the region north of the Esopus and east of Stony Clove, with the ancient marine bluff as its feature. Another lies west of Stony Clove and north of the railroad running from Phœnicia to Margaretville, declining from mountainous to rolling, pastoral country, famous for its cows. The third leaf, in the southeast, gathers together the jumble of mountains east of Big Injin Valley and north of the Rondout, an excellent camping land, with open woods, clear streams, and interesting heights. The fourth leaf, the rare one, lies to the southwest, including the mountains west of Big Injin and the flatter, pond-dotted second-growth of the wild and untenanted lands from the Delaware south for twenty miles. It was in search of the nature of this fourth leaf, of which no one could tell us definitely, that Brute and I set out.

Below Sundown the country falls and flattens, so we turned to keep within the sight of hemlock,

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eschewing Eureka and Claryville where the Neversink's two branches become of one mind, and made our way along an old wood trail, light-hearted from our send-off from Happy Valley, toward the East Branch of the Neversink. The country was in its most charming improvisation on the general theme of spring. Every turn of the trail received us with blossom and bird-song and sped us with some beautiful picture. The sky filled early with islands of white in a sea of blue that would have gladdened the blasé eyes of the daughters of the Hesperides.

Groves of fern grew out into the trail, sheltering carpets of littler growth: white violet and the white-veined partridge-vine, anemone and oxalis, the foam-flower and clintonia, gold-thread and bunch-berry, twisted stalk and Solomon's seal. We saw mosses in richer pattern than Persian ever dreamed, hillside glory, and the glow of sandy places, meadows here and there dancing with color —so much beauty that our fugitive appreciation of it seemed pitifully scant.

The forest, too, was exquisitely varied. Occasionally a grove of hemlocks would enhance the lighter greens of new leaves on the oaks and maples, poplars and beeches, and along the road a veteran pine would dignify an entire view. And always blues blended with greens, from the smile of the blue-eyed grass, through the wild iris of

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the swamp, to the beds of lupine and gentian and others I did not know.

There was no turn of the way that did not encounter an infinite gaiety of life: cinque-foil in the acre, evenly starring the spaces left by the less prodigal wild strawberry. We found some trilliums, and now and then a rare blossom when we stopped to look for it: the waxy-white pyrola growing out of a warm bed of pine-needles, and the fragrant pipsissewa beside it. Laurel grew in terraces, blackberries in mounds, and the wild honeysuckle's pink and white showed like a dairy-maid between the duchess laurel and the girl-graduate daisy. Nowhere have I seen such confusion of seasons as a thousand feet of altitude could make in a morning's walk. And I have not told the half—partly because I have no patience with catalogs, and partly for lack of names. And, when the flowers and the shadows of trees and the shapes of clouds have been enumerated, there are still the perfumes and the songs of birds.

The last were in such confusion as to make an incessant counterplay of melody. In the open fields bobolinks and meadow-larks, red-wings and the tribe of sparrows poured out their special ecstasies, as ladies before a concert, nobody listening to the others. But along the streams and in the soberer wood there was much finesse of melody, the dreamy white-throat and drowsy

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pewee enhancing the tiny motifs of vireo and warbler, which the imagination seized upon and carried along until some fresh voice, the mourning-dove, some distant hermit-thrush, or bell-clear tanager, would add a new wealth to the chants and madrigals.

As for the sparkle of goldfinch and dodge of wren, flash of warbler and flit of kinglet—they cannot be set down any closer than can be caught the exact amount of star-glitter at a given moment. There is but one allaying thought. Next June the same festival will be played through again, and those who are so lucky as to be tramping those same trails can bathe in those pleasures which I so charitably refrain from trying to compute.

Up the Neversink, lumbermen were getting out ash for airplanes, and a little farther up we came to a glorious growth of spruce and hemlock. Then, quite unwarned, we were brought by Coincidence, Fate's little brother, into as embarrassing a position as it has been my lot to meet.

In the slight breeze we had smelled smoke. Brute suggested that we follow it up. Breaking through some tangle, we heard a hurried noise as of something running, a smash of sticks, and then quiet. Following up the smoke odor, which had drifted down a glen, we came upon a queer-looking impromptu camp, where a loose fire smoldered. By it sat an ordinary tin can, which had once con-

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tained beans, but now held some tan-colored stuff that we supposed was tea. The beans were in a frying-pan, left burning on the coals. Then we saw, with horrid surprise, the skinned hind quarters of a fawn. Its little amber-colored cloven hoofs could have belonged to nothing else.

Whatever nature the suddenly deserting camping party might own to, it certainly seemed mysterious to us—mysterious and sickening. How people could, in the clean woods, fall so low as to kill fawns, we failed to see—failed with indignation. We were standing around, discussing the loathsome riddle presented, when, almost without noise, a fairly well dressed man with a long paper roll in his hand stepped over a log and was at our side.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, quite gently, "you 've been wanted now for two days for that killing on Deer Shanty Brook. This is too bad."

He turned over the small carcass with his toe.

I did not look at Brute. Somehow, I felt that he was blushing. I felt guiltier than if I had killed a dozen fawns, and probably looked it. I said, "Despite the evidence, we don't know as much about this as you."

The warden carelessly unbuttoned a button on his coat, and the badge showed. He looked a bit confused himself.

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"Where 's Deer Shanty Brook?" asked Brute, recovering.

"Where you were this time yesterday." He did n't say it with assurance.

"Do you really think that my friend and I killed that fawn and were concocting this horrible meal?" I asked.

He took another look at Brute, who had recovered from his guilty surprise. I remember thinking that I would never judge a man by appearances. Then he said:

"Well, you don't certainly look it. But I guess you 'll have to prove it."

"All right. Back there are some lumbermen. They saw us pass an hour ago."

Brute was looking at some mud by the fire. It was tracked up. He put his foot in one of the tracks.

"The devil takes a ten," he said, with a laugh.

The warden laughed a little.

"Will you go back with me to the men?" he asked.

"Sure," we assented.

"Well, I guess you won't have to. But what are you doing with those packs?"

In surprise, I had forgotten them. But nobody could want clearer evidence that, as poachers, we were abominably dressed for the part.

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We told him about the night before with Mr. Dimock, and then he confessed that he was n't a game but a fire warden, and so was always interested in stray smoke. We marked the place on the trail, and continued with him. We found him a most interesting man. He told us that a good deal of poaching was done. One of the neatest tricks was pulled off by two automobiles, one blocking the road to a pond while the other went in, jacked the deer with its lights, and often got one. But the mounted police were efficient, and the warden thought that the two or three rowdies responsible for the fawn-murder would probably be caught within twenty-four hours. In that neighborhood the deer seemed abundant. Our new friend told us that he had seen twenty-two at one time on a ridge, in autumn when the leaves had fallen before the season opened.

He explained the fire system: The entire region is dominated by seven stations, from which the hundred thousand acres of land belonging to the State can be watched for fire. These are: Mohonk on the south; Twaddell Point on the west; High Point in Wawarsing for the southern wilderness; Hunter for the entire northern region; and Belle Ayre, Balsam Lake Mountain, and Tremper for the great central forest.

The State land, in four counties, requires more than fifty fire wardens and about eight rangers.

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In dry weather these are stationed at strategic points in order to throw their forces in the very shortest warning upon an incipient conflagration. Thanks to their watchfulness, the excellence of the telephone service, the fire lanes, the response of the workmen, and the increased carefulness of hunters and fishermen, the Catskill loss for 1917 was about a thousand dollars, the expense of fighting the sixty-four fires that caused the loss was but five hundred dollars, and the acreage burned two thousand acres, mostly brush and second growth.

It is interesting to know that of these 64 fires careless smokers caused 13, locomotives 33, berry-pickers 1, hunters 4, brush-burners 8, incendiaries 2, children 2, and a burning building, 1.

As we walked, our warden filled us with information so interesting that we would have liked to annex him for as long as we should thirst for knowledge. He said that the leaf fires in the spring, before the new leaves had come out to keep the ground from drying, and in the fall before the autumn rains, were the worst, running fast and spreading far. Also, fires along farmlands through dry grass were swift and sometimes dangerous. Thanks to the top-lopping law, which requires lumbermen to cut up conifer tops down to the three-inch size and so prevents inflammable slash accumulating, there was almost no danger

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of those vast furnaces that used to follow in the wake of lumbermen.

At nightfall we three came to the road leading along the West Branch of the Neversink. The warden continued his way toward the Winnisook Club of snowy memories, while Brute and I turned down to Branch, parting with the liveliest good feeling and many a laugh at the mode of our introduction around the poachers' fire.

Branch is charmingly situated, and we slept with a sense of well being, surrounded for miles on every side by a wilderness forever unassailable by a completely predatory lumbering. The State owns some of the land, and will own more. It is a pity that it could not have been prudent enough to own the fishing. Clubs or millionaires have bought the lands or the rights to almost all the good trout water in the Catskills. To be sure, there is much of the Esopus, the streams from Hunter, some water about Willowemoc, and a few scattered brooks where any one can cast his fly. But from those the first fisherman can take the cream and the early small boy the rest. The great streams, both branches of the Neversink, and the Bushkill are closed to the public.

From Branch the easy way would have been to follow the road down to Claryville—and a very lovely road it is—and so out to the pond region. But we were just beginning to tap our energies,

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and all unwittingly set out upon a monumental day by short-cutting up Fall Brook and over to the grass-grown road that leads by Tunis Lake. Again the clouds rose in piled islands; but the day was rougher, and the blue sea slopped over in a wash of big drops, leaving an iridescent jewel-work on the sparkling pines and a curse upon the lips as we plunged through the bushes.

It was a lonely morning. In the deeper woods the birds were asleep and we saw no game, and the only man we met was an unreassuring specimen who exhorted us to turn in our tracks to avoid getting irretrievably lost. Though those were not the exact words he used. Judging by the amount of profanity an ex-lumberjack can control, I should argue that conversation in the absolute wilderness must consist entirely of addresses to the Deity.

Without describing our climb breath for breath, I can recommend the top of Balsam Lake Mountain for those who wish to push into a semi-pathless wilderness, mount through hazes of scrub and mosquitos, to emerge on a steel-towered eminence and get a view of all the blues in heaven and beneath. Here one is at last centered in wilderness. There are no towns of any size within a day's journey, and the villages do not show. A solid block of forest marches away on every side, down into valleys and up over farther ranges.

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There is no smoke, no noise, no visible highway, no farmers in the offing—nothing but an unfeatured forest wherein lurks a second-rate opportunity to play Daniel Boone.

Why this great stretch of second-growth woods, watered by delightful streams, scattered with small ponds, secluded because of the absence of approaching roads, and full of lesser game, should have been ignored by those who claim that they love the Catskills, I cannot surmise. One misses the beauty of old woods. The shut-in-ness of the trails leads to temporary melancholy. Food must be brought, for the native never reckons on an alien appetite. Bugs there are in season. But, to counteract all these disadvantages, there is an isolation that lures one into the belief that he is far from cities, a beauty of rolling ranges that appeals to people who like their views untouristed. I know of no place in the entire Catskill country more charming than the valley of the Bushkill.

It was in this back country, along the upper edge of Sullivan County, that Brute and I had another one of those delightful surprises that a pedestrian runs a hundred chances to the motorist's one of meeting. On the map of Sullivan County I had counted a hundred and twenty-odd ponds, and, although it meant running out of the mountainous Catskills to see some of them, I was curious to discover this region, which I had always supposed

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as dry as a desert. A very little sufficed. Go to the Adirondacks for water. But, as we were wending our misty way back into the highlands, we stopped at the top of a hill to the north of Willowemoc to make inquiry, and found that we had come to the domain, residence, and person of John Karst, who was the premier wood-engraver of school texts in our land.

He invited us in to exchange news before the hearth. His daughter, for whom is named Esther Falls, told us the interesting tale of their strange country, still a half wilderness. Their house, with its great ceiling beams and huge fireplaces, was full of stories. It had been built in the great days of the Livingston era, now vanished from the region, the memory of which is preserved in the town of Livingston Manor. It had been the scene of the meetings of the Sheepskin Indians, those whites who met in disguise to protest their taxes. Indian-hunters and grizzled trappers had talked before its chimney-place. Strings of fish, in the custom of those days, had hung from the rafters to dry while the talk went on.

Nor has John Karst neglected to add to the interest of this notable mansion. Quaint bric-à-brac, souvenirs of his more active days, valuable paintings, real tiles from the Low Countries, wampum, and the curiosities of many a land, each with some tale, came near to beguiling us over-long.

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Brute, whose edge for this sort of thing had never been taken off by the indiscriminate horrors of museums, roamed from relic to relic. I could scarcely tear myself away from the reminiscences of John Karst's long immersion in the fascinating life of books and printers.

With reluctance we left, coming out from the cheery fire into the mist with the feeling that of all unreal things this was the strangest, this unheralded hour in the high estate of civilization in the midst of our back-country ramble. In this region, overrun with rabbits, deer, and bear, we had found a friend of all publishers ruling a demesne in a half-feudal way. Truly the surprises of the Catskills never cease.

Our road brought us through a deep and extensive wood, over hill and down dale, until a precipitous slope sent us hurrying down to Turnwood on the Beaverkill, much the wiser for our long detour and no whit worse. Holding true to Catskill type, the land was one of beautiful combinations. Hill met valley in a succession of soft curves. Brooks poured into the mother stream from little gorges. Hemlocks darkened the watercourses, and the farther ranges shone with maple, ash, and oak. Toward the east the larger mountains looked very blue in the chastened light. There lurked still much of the aboriginal mystery in the forest dimness. We strode on without

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much talk. I think I had some sense of the impending. Everything was so quiet that one could almost hear the mumbling of the Fates. It was a theatrical place that Brute selected, however, and I certainly had n't guessed exactly what was coming when he said:

"To-morrow 's the 15th, and my furlough 's up."

"Your furlough!"

He smiled broadly at my tone of astonishment.

"Yes; the leave for loafing I 've allowed myself."

"And I suppose you 'll court-martial yourself and be your own firing squad at dawn if—"

"Don't joke," he said. "I enlist to-morrow, though I hate to quit the party."

I would not make a good guide over the rest of the region we traversed that afternoon. I know we came to the brow of a monstrous hill and looked off into a dim and disfeatured landscape. I remember that we took the train from Arena to Arkville, and by luck found our way to a charming inn under the eaves of Mt. Pakatakan. There were few guests, and we sat late alone before a grateful fire. I had seen others off to the war—some, in England, never to come back. But in the boy's eyes there was no thought of that, only an eagerness that I wondered I had not interpreted before. And in the morning the train was merci-

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fully on time, nor did our jests run out. Only in the hand-shake were the words we would not say. Such is the Anglo-Saxon way of bidding farewell, perhaps forever.

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CHAPTER XXII

THE CATSKILL PARK

DURING the progress of that day when Brute and I had reduced the art of being invited to motor to a strict science, we had come through Roxbury. As everybody who has been through Roxbury knows, to see it once is to be enthralled for life. Consequently, when I was deserted by my enlister, I determined to make that charming place my headquarters from which I could sally on a raid of investigation and to which I could return to digest the spoils.

Roxbury has a civic consciousness. It has its history, which was recently reviewed in a pageant admirably constructed by Margaret MacLaren Eager, beginning with the decision of John and Betty More in Scotland to emigrate, continuing with pictures of Indian times, Colonial customs, and coming down to the moment with a fine tribute to John Burroughs, fellow townsman. It has a beautiful church given by the Goulds, a park, and an environment where Nature has been kindest. There are mountains, but they do not shut one in.

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There are a myriad streams. And the people, in addition to their daily business, have one and all caught the cue of happiest living. No one comes to their town without being made to feel at home, without reacting to this fillip of good-fellowship. I am sure that this is not merely a personal impression. I have talked with many other stranggers who acknowledged the flavor of kindness peculiar to this spot.

From Roxbury I made several excursions, to keep fit. One, on a day of picture-postcard colors, included Pine Hill and the summit of Belle Ayre. A steel tower gives a view of the slide on Slide; of Double-top, another elephant; of Overlook, a far retreating wave; of the sharp-edged Stony Clove; of Utsayantha in the dim northwest; of Tower and Windham High Peak. Big Injin Valley is particularly appealing from Belle Ayre, with its Lost Clove nosing into the mountain's side. Big Balsam Lake Mountain rises high with its wealth of forest about it. I stood on the porch of the Grand View Hotel, which is confronted by the long wall of Belle Ayre and looks up Big Injin Valley to a distant but still impressive view of Slide and the Wittenberg. I curved through the daisied pastorals of the Bovina valleys, and took many another jaunt, going sometimes to recommended places, but oftener where only the names suggested something of interest.

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Photograph by William F. Kriebel

ROXBURY THE RARE

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Photograph by J. B. Allison

GREEN PASTURES

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The Catskills have got off better than other picturesque parts of our country in the matter of names. Esopus, Ashokan, Neversink, Schoharie, Vly, Onti Ora, Devasego, Ticetonyk, Utsayantha, Pine Orchard, Peekamose—these are beautiful and have some character. But, like the forest, the animal life, the wild-flowers even, names are in danger. There are too many renamed for capitalists and chewing-gums. History depends on names, and a nation's chronicles are rich or thin according to the ease with which time-laden designations are changed in behalf of the richest corner grocer. There ought to be a censorship for new names. If the Rubicon and Rheims were rechristened Mudbank and New Ashland, if Olympus were rewritten High Peak, the world would be the loser. The historical societies had better start a little research and fix up some of the Maple Shades and Pleasantvilles, or poets will never be much moved to celebrate our own heroics.

I met a gentleman, the other day, who told me that he had been instrumental in getting the name of one town, whose pretty name I forget, changed to Arkville. *Arkville!* Even Noah himself forbore to do that! "Tabby-cat" or "Mule" would not be a more witless scream. Since the gentleman was eighty-five, I could but grin and bear it. But I silently wished that he had descendants who would have to dwell in the suburbs of Arkville—

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named, I suppose, Larkville or Darkville or Barkville. People need not complain about the dun placidity of their existence while they are content with such mediocrity of *milieu*. The cheerful ugliness of a baboon's face is at least stimulating, and if there be any virtue in personality, it were better to struggle with Przemysl than lapse to the imbecility of much of our present nomenclature.

While roaming the Catskill woods alone I had an excellent chance to compare the beauties and advantages of a hard-wood forest with those of the soft-wood and mixed forests of the Adirondacks, with which I had been more familiar. Undoubtedly the most appealing tree-land in the East is the unburned, coniferous, primeval forest occurring in the gifted recesses of the Adirondacks. There the great trees are far apart; there is little brush; the floor is soft, spongy, thick, and occasional huge birches add just the final touch of lighter beauty. In the Adirondacks there are less than 100,000 acres of this left, and in the Catskills none at all. In the Catskills there are only 40,000,000 board feet of soft woods standing, three quarters of it spruce and the rest hemlock, with just a little balsam on the high slopes, and a scattering of pine, cedar, and tamarack. There are 133,000,000,000 board feet of hard woods, birch and maple each totaling more than all the soft woods, the beech and poplar totaling respectively

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thrice and twice as much as all the remaining miscellaneous hard woods.

Compared to the great Adirondack wilderness, with its 8,000,000,000 of board feet, the Catskills seem a mere wood-lot. But if you will look down from Belle Ayre or Slide or Balsam Lake Mountain, you will heave a sigh of satisfaction that there is so much of it.

The future of the Catskills depends upon its trees. These are situated inside an area called the Forest Preserve, in which is the Catskill Park, the choicer, central area to be even more rigorously protected. When a man steps from his train into the deep wood and sees the birch shining about him, the great sugar-maples forming vast overheads of green, the beeches a dense bower of shade, and here and there a hemlock, a locust, a thorn-tree, a poplar grove, or a sentinel pine, he gives thanks that someone was far-sighted enough to foresee the Park and put the legislation through.

If I were landscape-gardener to the Elysian Fields, I would have them mostly forest. There should be worshipful groves of white pine for the devout, and much bed-assuaging balsam for the sleepy; there should be hemlock for dignity, and the delicate tamarack and all the spruces. But also there should be beautiful vales of beech, and shore-lines of white birch, and many another landscape as if it were the Catskills. Nor would I for-

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get to have much white ash and the coon-beloved basswood, as in the lower valleys of all the Catskills. But I would not admit those yellow-birch thickets and sapling cherries of which one finds so much in the burnt sections.

In the Catskill Park it is hard to say whether the maple, the beech, or the birch is the prevailing tree; for, at one time or another, each makes such an appeal as to make you wish it predominant. The birch is first, by all standards of beauty. Against winter snows it shines slim and pale, and in the midsummer dusk it shows shy and supple and worthy of Diana. Beneath the white bark is a crocus green, and beneath that umber, and beneath that honest wood which is good for burning, green or tinder-dry. The birch can be used for shelter by day and for torch by night. It always responds to the intelligent demand, is free from the plague—the supreme example in nature of use and beauty going hand in hand.

The beech is also invaluable. In spring its delicate foliage is the tenderest of dreams this side the tamarack's; in summer it becomes a bower of shade; in fall a burnished marvel of beaten gold; and in winter the white parchment tissue tries to clothe the gray nakedness of the smooth-boled tree. Its wood is strong. Its fruit, the three-sided nut, keeps more animals from starvation, probably, than any other single item of diet,

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except possibly field-mice. Even the leaf buds all the winter long, slim spikes of brown, are marks of beauty. The beech at its perfection is the epitome of strength and grace and color,—a forest panther.

The sugar-maple was created on a happy day. Why some trees should be so heavily endowed, while others languish in poverty of fiber and of sap, is a mystery that I dedicate to John Burroughs to explain. It is a tree to set before a king, if he be sweet-toothed. He will have sugar for his mush, syrup for his cakes, and all tried out over a sugar-maple flame. For, though it seems sinful to cut the tree for stoves, yet it is an excellent fire-wood.

The Catskills are a vast expanse of confectionery. Wild honey, wild strawberries, wild sugar! In late March or early April whole groves of gray mottled trees glitter with buckets at their waists. To look at the slow drops, and to realize that it takes fifty quarts of sap to make a pound of sugar, is to appreciate the privileges of the corner grocery. What an unmerciful life our forebears led! Flax to grow, candles to dip, sugar to concoct from oozy trees. No wonder Longfellow thought that life was real and earnest. On the other hand, when you cease to be a looker-on and begin to manipulate your own testing pans, to pour the syrup on snow, when spring is in the air and this

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celestial candy in your mouth you wonder how anybody can bear to patronize a store.

The spruce cannot rank with this gifted company. It appeals neither to the palate nor to the eye. Its coat is rough, its life-blood sticky, its shape neither tapered to the exquisite spire of the balsam nor spread with the generous wideness of the pine. Yet it strengthens the Catskill forest. All cannot be aërial birch; there must be shadow. The spruce has its dream in spring, too, when it puts out green fingers to strengthen its hold on the world. Then, with that secured, it dozes off again into the grim silence of its normal mood.

There are many other trees to interest the man who allows himself to observe the unobtruding forest: yellow pine, walnut, shagbark hickory, the cedars, aspens, and poplars, willows, and the fine-foliaged ironwood, alders to set the fisher wild, a chestnut here and there, and chestnut oaks, elms to make New England envious, witch-hazel, shiny sweet-gum, the mottled sycamore, shadbush and cherry, a tribe of maples, dogwood, and a rich underwood of laurel and a dozen shrubs. . . .

New Yorkers have earned the name of their State. They are the Empire builders. With a double-barreled intelligence, they have decreed their great parks for recreation and for use. They have preserved their wide forests from extinc-

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tion, and are now setting about applying the scientific management that utilizes—fire lanes, watch-towers, and expert lumbering, which takes only the mature trees and does not leave slash to precipitate frightful fires. As certainly as the groves were God's first temples, most lumbermen have been Huns. A desecrated woodland is only less wrath-compelling than shattered cathedrals and dissected children. But the Hunless world is coming, and with it the time when campers put out their fires, when fishermen throw their cigarette stumps in the brook, when berry-pickers take less heed for the morrow at the land-owners' expense, when all railroads use oil for fuel, and when those men who want to take out a grudge on the State will shoot their victims instead of burning up posterity's trees.

In the Catskills one can enjoy, then, an extensive forest, covering a country partly mountainous and partly rolling, a few small lakes, a wealth of running water; a place for camping, or boarding with simple folk, or putting up at expensive hotels. Above all, one has proximity to New York. And this fact brings me to a delicate topic: the relation of Jew and Gentile—a bull that I must take by the horns, and that I think I can gently lead away and yet stay honest. Let me repeat two remarks: One of my friends exclaimed, when I mentioned my trip: "Didn't you find

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it overrun with Jews?" And one day, while walking through Fleischmann's, I overheard this: "Would n't there be too many Gentiles in Hunter?" "Oh! Not enough to hurt."

So long as there are so many inconsiderate Jews, so many non-practising Christians, it will be easier for both to keep clannishly apart. In the Catskills there are certain sections visited exclusively by Jews and others exclusively by Gentiles. One race likes one thing and the other another. It seems infinitely petty to me for either to sacrifice the charms and satisfactions of a beautiful region because he might be disturbed by the other. The slightest amount of investigation will suffice to find such sections, and will be repaid by the unique values of the Catskill country.

And, now that I have come to the valedictory, I wonder whether I have made you realize the unique values of the Park without over-painting. For the globe-trotter who boasts of his planetizing ability and cares for sights only as they are big, there is precious little in the Catskills. For the man who must have beetling crags, and whose enjoyment is ruined if there is another man in the same county, there is but little more. But for him who is not blind to one type of beauty simply because he can remember others, the Catskill Mountains and their surrounding hills are rich with a variety of wealth quite unimaginable. Before I visited

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them I imagined that they were a set of mediocre hills infested by a sandwich-eating summer populace. I found impressive ranges, noble cliffs, forests with game, streams with fish, and I came away with recollections of many cheerful firesides. In no other American vacation-land can one find a more interesting alternation of forest tramping and village living, a richer background of subdued mountain and inviting valley, a sympathetic native population with finer historic antecedents and more solid qualities. If the Eternal is n't visible to you there, it will never be in remoter lands. Happiness may not be the supreme good, but it is a joyful desideratum. It is found only where there is harmony between the without and the within. For experiments in harmonizing, I know of no more convenient spot than this Land of Little Rivers. Certainly it overflowed with gladness for Brute and for me, and for its satisfactions we many a time thanked God and the State of New York.

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SOME GUIDE-BOOK ADDENDA

Maps

Write to the United States Geological Survey, Washington, D. C., for the Topographical maps, scale of a mile to the inch, named "Kaaterskill," "Durham," "Phœnicia," "Slide," "Gilboa," "Margaretville," "Neversink," and "Rosendale," if you wish to cover the entire section. The maps cost ten cents apiece. "Kaaterskill," "Phœnicia," "Slide," and "Margaretville" are sufficient for the heart of the Catskills.

Climate

Midday in June, July, August, and early September is usually hot; summer nights are cool. Winter temperatures are from ten to thirty degrees lower than in New York City. Normally there is sleighing all winter, and in summer the mountains produce harmless showers almost daily.

Possibilities of Travel

There are no canoe routes, and the saddle-horse is infrequent; but, strangely enough, the country lends itself excellently to the extremes, motoring

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and walking. High speed and low mountains make a poor combination for after-impressions; but the roads are so good, and there are so many beautiful spots for lunch-parties, that to have a center from which one can adventure by day in a car is a fine way of getting to know the region. I should pick Woodstock, Shandaken, and Roxbury as successive centers to motor from.

Motor Trips

If I were showing a friend the Catskills, I should following the following route:

Kingston (about 90 miles from New York City); Ashokan Reservoir (10), turning left, passing by Spillway and Aërator to Watson Hollow (15) (a beautiful road to Peekamose and down the Rondout Creek, but stony and narrow); around to Ashokan and West Hurley and turning left to Woodstock (20) (walk up to Meads and the Overlook. It can be driven); to West Saugerties (11), up Plaat Clove, and take in the Grand Canyon without fail; to Tannersville (6), view from Onti Ora Park, then through Stony Clove to Phœnicia (12) (side trip up Woodland Valley (7); Big Injin (3) (side trip up the valley (8). Then walk to Winnisook Club (one hour); through Arkville to Roxbury (23) (walk uphill to Woodchuck Lodge); Roxbury to Grand Gorge (7); Grand

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Gorge to Devasego Falls (4), to Prattsville (3), to East Windham (15); East Windham to Hunter and Haines Falls (20), to Mountain House (3); Haines Falls to Palenville (4) and to Catskill (10); Catskill to Kingston (22).

This route provides for the more famous sights. It neglects the Westkill Notch, the beautiful Neversink country, and many a charming side road about Jewett, Margaretville, and the outlying sections.

The State roads are always dependable and well garaged. Most of the smaller dirt roads are practicable for cars. If your automobile is converted from a bird of passage to a beast of burden, with a tent in the tonneau, you can get still more from your fortnight.

On Foot

Routes so depend upon the season and what you call pleasure that there is small use in drawing plans. With a pack and a map, you will be as adaptable to desire as a dollar bill. The country lends itself so well to walking, and there is such variety within small compass, that a man can have about what he most desires. Again, supposing that I have an amenable friend for a ten-day trip, I should do about as follows:

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First day. Train to West Hurley. Walk from there through Woodstock, Meads, and the Overlook to Plaat Clove, seeing Devil's Kitchen ..... (14 miles)

Second day. To Haines Falls via Clum Hill and down the Kaaterskill Clove, up the Otis to Mountain House ..... (14 miles)

Third day. Train to Kaaterskill Junction. Walk to Phœnicia through Stony Clove and go up Woodland Valley ..... (14 miles)

Fourth day. Climb Wittenberg and Cornell, going down southeast by compass until you strike Maltby Hollow and West Shokan ..... (6 hours)

Fifth day. Over by Peekamose Lodge and down the Rondout to Bull Run. By trail to East Branch of the Neversink at Denning, and over the ridge to Branch . (20 miles)

Sixth day. Down the West Branch of Neversink, and by map and compass, passing Tunis Lake, to Big Balsam Lake and Mountain ..... (12 miles)

Seventh day. Climb Big Balsam (2 hours), and, going by Seager, to Arkville .... (10 miles)

Eighth day. Train to Roxbury, and rest. Stroll out to Woodchuck Lodge ..... (3 miles)

Ninth day. From Roxbury to Grand Gorge, Devasego Falls, Pratts Rocks, Windham, and East Windham ..... (30 miles)

Tenth day. To Cairo (10 miles) and train to Catskill

Total equivalent to 150 miles

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Anybody can soon train into a fifteen-mile day and never feel it. The trouble with the foregoing schedule, while it shows the Catskills to some advantage, is that at each place there are enough beautiful things to see to spend a day or so lounging around and taking them in. It is easily the outline of a three-weeks' trip as properly taken. The Catskills have a way with them that the novelists would call intriguing—which means, I suppose, that they continually insinuate you into situations that are unexpectedly alluring. They invite. Your wits and leg muscle must do the rest.

Bibliography

The written word about the Catskills is scant, hard to get at, and mostly uninteresting when reached. It is divided into the early classics, the exclamatory descriptions of mid-Victorian travelers, and latterday articles of information. Among the classics I should suggest:

Cooper's "Pioneers" and "Pathfinder" for atmosphere.

Irving's "Rip" and "Diedrich Knickerbocker" for more atmosphere.

Parkman for the setting.

Bryant's "Catterskill Falls" is not particularly impressive.

A collection of quotations from N. P. Willis, Miss Martineau, Bayard Taylor, Thomas Cole, Park Benjamin, Gaylord Clarke, Tyrone Power, still to be found in libraries, will sate any thirst for travel

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description of that era, though it is not fair to put Bayard Taylor with the rest. He is vivid and true. If you must have a "guide" to this easy country, Baedeker is still the best.

Mearns (in U. S. Nat. Hist. Mus. Bull.), "Note of Catskill Mammals."

Heilprin (Amer. Geog. Soc. Bull.), "The Catskill Mts."

Guyot, "Geology of Catskills."

These three make the scientific aspects of the mountains very fascinating.

Hamilton Mabie in "Backgrounds of Literature."

A. W. Dimock's "Winter in the Catskills" from "Country Life."

Clifton Johnson in "St. Lawrence to Virginia" and "The Picturesque Hudson."

Henry James in the "New York and Hudson: A Spring Impression" in "North American Review."

R. H. Vail in "Along Hudson in Stage-Coach Days."

De Lisser's "The Picturesque Catskills."

Weed Thurlow's "Reminiscences of Catskill."

A. E. P. Searing's "The Land of Rip Van Winkle."

D. A. Hawkins's "Traditions of Overlook Mountains."

I found these interesting, particularly the first five. Also the State Report and accounts of the Ashokan Reservoir are full of scattered interest.

This list is intentionally incomplete, many of the "Guides" being the extreme of dulness. But the works of Burroughs fill all the gaps. He has but one book, "In the Catskills," which avowedly deals with his life country. But almost all that he has written deals with the Catskills. If you

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know your Burroughs, you know the birds, the beasts, the geology, and the unsubstantial genius of the land better than if you had set painstakingly to read up all the other literature on the region. So I leave you in his hands. They will never fail you.

The Pictures

The more civilized we are, the more we take for granted. People who enjoy pictures are civilized. The young men who have traveled and climbed and exposed themselves and their plates to illuminate the foregoing pages get less credit than scene-painters and less reward than peanut-vendors (whom I suppose must come out even). Art is as long as it ever was, and much more expensive. Fortunately, it is no less enthralling, and so these artists of the camera probably have their own private satisfactions. But that makes me none the less desirous of acknowledging my debt to them: to Mr. Kriebel for the results of long study and enthusiasm handed over so generously; to Mr. Allison for his willingness to trudge with tripod and sit by the day with a sick perspective; to Mr. Burtt for—lo! these many things.

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INDEX

Acknowledgments, 318
Acra Point, 169
Adirondacks, 31, 43
Arena, 297
Arkville, 297
Ashland, 163
Ashokan, Mt., 266
Ashokan Reservoir, 240 ff., 266

Balsam Lake Mt., 293
Balsam Top, 228
Barrus, Dr. Clara, 251
Batavia Kill, 155
Belle Ayre, 229
Big Hollow, 155
Big Injin Valley, 211 ff.
Black Dome, 155, 157
Black Head, 155
Bloomberg Mt., 229
Blue Hole, The, 280
Bovina, 303
Branch, 292
Broadstreet Hollow, 228
Burnt Knob, 156
Burroughs, John, 238 ff.
Bushkill Valley, 294
Buttermilk Falls, 93
Byrdcliffe, 24

Cats, Jacob, 43
Catskill, 111
  Aqueduct, 269 ff.
  animals, 182 ff.
  bibliography, 316
  birds, 176, 285
  climate, 312
  fire system, 290
Catskill—*Continued*
  fishing, 292
  flowers, 262, 284
  food, 66
  forest, 304
  Forest Preserve, 305
  limits defined, 45
  maps, 312
  motor trips, 313
  object of visiting, 42
  Park, 306
  possibilities of travel, 312
  towns, 146
Chichester, 130
Claryville, 285
Clum Hill, 57
Cole, Thomas, 155
"Contemporary Verse," 256
Cooper's Lake, 19
Cornell Mt., 228

Deer Shanty Brook, 288
Devasego Falls, 206
Devil's Kitchen, 40
Dimock, House of, 281
Double Top, 229
Dougherty Brook, 234
Driscoll, Miss Louise, 256
Druid Rocks, 116

Eager, M. M., 299
Eagle Mt., 229
East Ashland, 150
Eastkill, 148
Echo Lake, 33
Edgewood, 133
Elfin Pass, 116

Digitized by Google

Elka Park, 58
Elm Ridge, 156
Equipment, 134 ff.
Esopus, 211
Eureka, 285

Fairy Spring, 116
Fall Brook, 293
Faun's Leap, 103
Fire stations, 290
Fleischmann's, 310
Fly Brook, 207

Gilboa, 273
Ginseng, Mt., 168
Graham, 229
Grand Canyon, 40
Grand Gorge, 206
Grand View, 300

Haines' Falls, 204
Halcott, 229
Hall, Dr. E. H., 269
Harrison, Birge, 16, 25
Hawkeye, 115
Hayden, Mt., 168
Hemlock, Mt., 229
High Peak, 76
Hillyer's Ravine, 103
Hollow Tree Ravine, 132
Hudson Valley, 70
Hunter Mt., 120
Huntersfield, 171
Hussey's Hill, 228

Indian Head, 22, 55
Irving, 96 ff.

Jewett, 149

Kaaterskill Clove, 91
Kaaterskill Falls, 85
Kaaterskill House, 75
Kanape Brook, 277
Karst, John, 277
Kerr, 'Gene, 275
Kingston, 5

Lanesville, 127, 132
Lemon Squeezer, 116
Lexington, 148
"Life Histories of Northern Mammals," 191
Livingston Manor, 295
Lone Mt., 229
Lost Clove, 229
Lost Mt., 170

Manorkill, 169
Maps, 312
Margaretville, 284
Meads', 25
Mine Hollow, 277
Mink Hollow, 19
Mink Mt., 228
Mountain House View, 70
"My Garden is a Pleasant Place," 256

Nebo Mt., 168
Neversink, 287
North Dome, 228

Old Man of the Mts., 228
Olive, 246
Oliverea, 212
Onteora Park, 58
Overlook, 76
Overlook House, 26

Pakatakan Mt., 297
Palenville, 104 ff.
Palenville Overlook, 87
Panorama from Slide Mt., 227
Pantherkill, 235
Panther Mt., 213
Parker Mt., 58
Peekamoose, 277
Phœnicia, 129
Pine Hill, 300

Digitized by Google

Pisgah, 169
Plaat Clove, 34
Plateau Mt., 57
Plattekill Clove, 33
Pleasant Mt., 228
Pratt's Rocks, 206
Prattsville, 206
Profile Rock, 110

Red Falls, 174, 206
Rich, J. Lynn, 207
Richmond Mt., 169
Richtmyer Peak, 169
Romer Mt., 130
Rondout, The, 280
Round Top, 188
Roxbury, 299

Samson Mt., 260
Santa Cruz Ravine, 115
Sawkill, 15
Schoharie, 56, 147
Seton Thompson, 191
Shandaken, 210
Sheepskin Indians, The, 295
Sheridan Mt., 130
Shokan, 246
Slabsides, 239, 253
Slide Mt., 222 ff.
Snyder's Hollow, 235
South Hollow, 277
Spruce Top, 58
Squirrel Inn, 100
Stamford, 203
State Roads, 101
Stony Clove, 124
Stoppel Mt., 121
Stork, Wharton, 256
Sugar Loaf, 55
Sundown, 284
Sunset Park, 100
Sunset Rock, 100

Table Mt., 229
Tannery Brook, 15
Thunderstorms, 121
Ticetonyk, 228
Tobias Mt., 228
Tongore, 244
Tremper Mt., 130
Tunis Lake, 293
Turnwood, 296
Twilight Park, 60, 100, 115
Twin Mt., 57

Utsayantha Mt., 202

Vly Mt., 227

"Waiting," 247
Walking, 157
Watson Hollow, 277
Westkill Mt., 132, 208
Westkill Notch, 208
West Park, 253
West Shokan, 261
Wetzel, Louis, 118
White, Hervey, 19
Whitehead, R. R., 24
Wildcat Ravine, 115
Willowemoc, 295
Windham, 150
Windham High Peak, 156
Winnisook Club, 214
Wittenberg, 228
Woodchuck Lodge, 253
Woodland Valley, 234
Woodstock, 15 ff.

Zoar Mt., 168

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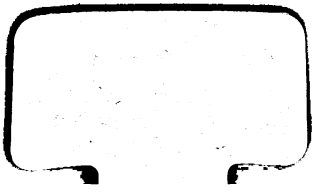

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